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**A Journey of the Repressed in Zhang Xianliang's Self-
Fictionalization**

By

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Ph D Dissertation

Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures

School of Oriental and African Studies

University of London

2001



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Abstract:

The dissertation studies the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang from the viewpoint of political unconscious. Zhang has been under different kinds of labour reform and re-education in mainland China for twenty-two years. The experience is too painful to recall, yet too feared to be forgotten. The repressed trauma of Zhang is therefore displaced and disguised in the fictional language of reform, remembrance, love, sex and death. Each language fulfils one layer of Zhang's hidden wishes. Yet the desiring chain moves on with new forms of substitutions until death. The study investigates his unconscious psyche from the Historical subtexts of conflicting impulses between body and mind, self and Other, individual and socialist Ideological State Apparatuses, and the residual, dominant and emerging modes of production.

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Introduction: A Journey of the Repressed in Zhang Xianliang's Self-Fictionalization

The dissertation tries to approach the fictional corpus of a mainland Chinese writer Zhang Xianliang from the viewpoint of psychological journey. Zhang's fictional journey passes through five stages: reform, remembrance, love, sex and death. Zhang Xianliang published his poem "Song of the strong wind" ("Dafeng ge" <大風歌>) in 1957. The poem was promptly criticized as a big poisonous weed. In the Anti-Rightist Campaign of the same year, at the age of twenty-one, he was classified as a rightist. From 1958 to 1976, Zhang underwent re-education through labour twice, one restrictive administration, one people's dictatorship and one imprisonment in mainland China. In 1979, his name was cleared. Since then, he has become a major novelist in Ningxia Province and published more than 3 million words of fictional works.

Zhang Xianliang's fictional journey is "overdetermined" (in the Freudian sense) by the life experience of himself and events that happened in contemporary China. Zhang has been under different kinds of labour reform and re-education for twenty-two years. The experience is too painful to recall, yet too feared to be forgotten. The former poet then becomes a novelist, with all his fictional works evolved and revolved around the self-awakening of man. During the journey, the inner consciousness of Zhang Xianliang becomes a self-enhancing discourse embodied in different linguistic forms ranging from the fictional languages of reform, remembrance, love, sex and death. Each language fulfils one layer of Zhang's hidden wishes. Yet desire moves on like a chain requesting new forms of substitutions till the end of life.

From the viewpoint of psychoanalysis, fictional language is in fact a symbolic fulfilment of repressed wishes. It is not a direct reflection of reality but a disguised sublimation of insatiable desires aiming to displace the traumatic impact of

life upon individual psyche. Storytelling provides temporary resolutions for irreconcilable conflicts in life: conflicts between the body and the mind, the self and the Other, ideology of the individual and the state, and among antagonistic moments of History in the co-existence of different modes of production. The imaginary language gives the writer a satisfying image of himself. It interpellates him as a subject in his world and transforms him from the victim of time into the subject of history. However, irreconcilable conflicts in real life can only be temporarily resolved. Wishes could be fulfilled but desire can never be satisfied.

In the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang, each language fulfils part of his wishes while repressing the others. Whenever the conscious subject finds a false sense of satisfaction from the ideological mirror of language, the residues of unsatisfaction simply come back and haunt his imagination, triggering off a continuous chain of further substitutions and displacements in other forms of language. The chain of signifiers progresses from the language of reform to the language of remembrance, at first intended to look forward, finally forced to look back. The language of reform and remembrance interpellate the writer as a materialist. Then the journey gathers into its own momentum travelling towards more elemental forms of love, sex to death. They are the languages repressed by the grand narrative of history and culture. Conscious formulations of the writer have to give way to the free play of signifiers in the desiring chain.

My reading begins with the critical assumption that the fictional works of Zhang Xianliang are wish fulfilments of the writer himself. Yet wishes have different sedimentary layers. In the reading of the first layer, the fictional language is realized as the sublimation of repressed wishes. Conflict exists between the body and the mind. In the reading of the second layer, the language manifests the desire for completeness between the self and the female Other. The man has a yearning for the gaze of the woman. In the reading of the third layer, the language ideologically

interpellates the individual as a subject. Identification is found between the individual and the Authority. In the reading of the fourth layer, the language manifests itself in conflicting motives from the antagonistic modes of production at a particular Historical juncture. In this dissertation, these layered readings would guide the general framework in the analysis of the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang.

The first chapter gives a detailed summary of Zhang Xianliang's life. Then it tries to situate him in the context of contemporary Chinese history and literature of the New Period. After introducing the thematic classifications of Zhang's literary works, it suggests a more holistic, structural organization of Zhang's fictional corpus. The second chapter deals with more conventional approaches to Zhang's fictional works, namely from the perspective of realism and sex literature. Then it introduces my own approach of psychoanalysis: the reading of the fictional language as disguising different layers of hidden desires. The third chapter investigates the language of reform, namely Zhang Xianliang's reform fiction *Dragon seed* and *Style of man*. The fourth chapter deals with the language of reflection which represses a layer of love yearning to be satisfied in the coming love stories of Zhang Xianliang. Yet the language of love has multiple meanings: love as a inner conflict between sex and morality, love as a union between man and woman, love as a ritual installing an individual in a familial and social setting. The fifth chapter deals with the alleged sex literature as a response to the conflicting motives between socialist hegemony and self-expression in the middle of the Reform decade of the 1980s. The sixth chapter is the climax of Zhang's fictional journey when love and death are interplayed in the inner consciousness of the self.

Chapter I Towards the Self-Awakening of Man: Zhang Xianliang in Context

Section A: Life and Significance of Zhang Xianliang

1. Life of Zhang Xianliang

Zhang Xianliang 張賢亮 was born in December 1936 in an old bureaucratic family in Nanjing 南京. His ancestral home was in Xuyi County of Jiangsu Province 江蘇盱眙. During the Sino-Japanese War, Zhang's entire family moved to Chongqing 重慶. The family went back to Shanghai 上海 after the defeat of Japan. Zhang studied in a primary school in Shanghai. After the Communist take-over in 1949, he spent his junior secondary school years in Nanjing. Then he moved to the North with his father and continued his study in Beijing. In 1952, his father was arrested because of some dubious "historical problem." Due to his family background, Zhang was often despised and ostracised in his school years. He graduated from high school in 1955, but failed to get into a University. Later, it became quite difficult for the family to go on living in a city. As a result Zhang went back to the Big North West with his mother and sister. They settled down in Helan County of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region 寧夏賀蘭 and Zhang worked as a farmer in a small village near the Yellow River. In 1956, he became a teacher in a grammar school for cadres of the county, teaching junior secondary school language classes.

In 1951, Zhang began to publish poems in Nanjing *New China Daily* (*Xinhua ribao* 新華日報). In January 1957, he published his lyric poem "Night" ("Ye" <夜>) in *Yan River Literature and Arts* (*Yanhe wenyi* 《延河文藝》), followed by poems like "Songs sung after work" ("Zai shougong hou chang de ge" <在收工後唱的歌>) and "Songs sung at dusk" ("Zai bangwan chang de ge" <在傍晚唱的歌>). By July of the same year, he had published about 60 poems in newspapers and journals like *River Yan* (*Yanhe* 《延河》), *Stars* (*Xingxing* 《星星》), *Poetry Journal* (*Shikan* 《詩刊》) and *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo qingnianbao* 《中國青年報》). His major poem "Song of the strong wind" (*Dafeng ge* <大風歌>) was one of them. The poem proved to be his turning point. It was promptly criticized both by *Yan River Literature and Arts* and *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日報) as a "big poisonous weed."¹ Then in the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, at twenty-one, Zhang was classified as a Rightist. The poem became the evidence for his anti-party, anti-socialism and anti-people guilt.

¹ In the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, many artistic productions and literary works were labelled as "poisonous weeds" that should be uprooted, as opposed to fragrant flowers that could be allowed to blossom. Many of the producers and writers were designated as Rightists. See W. J. F. Jenner, ed., *Fragrant weeds / Chinese short stories once labelled as "Poisonous weeds"* (Hongkong : Joint, 1983), xi-xvii.

In May 1958, he was sent to a re-education-through-labour camp (*laojiao nongchang* 勞教農場) in Ningxia 寧夏 for re-education.² He was released in 1961, being taken to another camp to be a worker. In 1963, he was categorized as an active Counter-Revolutionary (*xianxing fan'geming* 現行反革命).³ The Court ruled to discipline him for 3 years. In the Socialist Education Movement (*shejiao yundong* 社教運動), he was sent to a re-education-through-labour camp for re-education again. He was released in 1968 and was sent back to the same farm to be a worker. Soon he was administered by the restrictive dictatorship of the Cultural Revolutionaries (*wenge zhuanzheng* 文革專政) till 1969. In 1970, during the Movement of the "One-hit-three-oppositions" (*yida sanfan* 一打三反), he was imprisoned, only to be released once more in 1973.⁴

² Re-education through labour is a government policy designed to force remedial "education" upon criminals whose offenses are not serious but who have repeatedly resisted reform and are in need of additional discipline. See Wu Hongda Harry, *Laogai: The Chinese Gulag* (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1992), 81.

³ "An active counter-revolutionary" refers to a person who was openly opposed to the Communist Party but had never actually engaged in any important counter-revolutionary activities. Some were merely dissatisfied with or opposed to certain Party leaders. See Wu Hongda Harry, *Laogai*, 24, 93.

⁴ For a better understanding of the various movements during the Cultural Revolution, refer to Liu Qingfeng 劉青峰, ed., *Cultural Revolution: historical facts and studies* (Hongkong: Chinese UP, 1996).

From 1958 to 1976, Zhang twice underwent re-education through labour, one restrictive administration, one people's dictatorship and one imprisonment. He had been a vagrant and begger in the intervals. In September 1979, Zhang's name was fully cleared. From 1979 onwards, he has become a major novelist in Ningxia. Since then, he has published more than 3 million words of fictional works. In 1980, Zhang's "Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>) won the Nationwide Excellent Short Story Award (全國優秀短篇小說獎). It was highly acclaimed by Ding Ling 丁玲 as "a work with blood, flesh and soul" (*you xue you rou you linghun de zuopin* 有血有肉有靈魂的作品).⁵ The story later was rewritten as the filmscript of Li Zhun's 李準 *Herdsman* (*Mumaren* 《牧馬人》). It won the Nationwide Excellent Filmscript Award (全國優秀故事片獎) and an Honorary Award of the International Film Festival (國際電影節榮譽獎) in Manila.

Zhang Xianliang's novellas *Dragon seed* (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》) and *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* <河的子孫>) earned him literary award from *The Contemporary* (*Dangdai* 《當代》). In 1983, his short story "Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>) won the Nationwide Excellent Short Story Award. In 1984, his novella *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》) won him a Nationwide Award for

⁵ Ding Ling, "A Eulogy of patriotism" ("Yi shou aiguo zhuyi de zan'ge" <一首愛國主義的贊歌>), in *Literary Journal* (*Wenxuebao* 《文學報》), 2 April 1981.

Excellent Novellas.⁶ In 1999, *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) was chosen by renowned Hong Kong and overseas scholars for *Asia Week* (亞洲周刊) of Hong Kong to be one of the One Hundred Best Chinese Novels of the 20th Century 《二十世紀中文小說一百強》.⁷ Besides "Soul and body," Zhang's other works like "Bitter springs," *Dragon seed*, "The Black cannon romance" ("Langman de heipao" <浪漫的黑炮>), *Style of man* (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》) were all filmed. Some were staged as TV series.

In 1980, Zhang became an editor of *Literary Arts of Ningxia*, now renamed *Shuofang* 《朔方》. Then, he joined the Association of Chinese Writers (*Zhongguo zuojia xiehui* 中國作家協會). He was elected to be a Council member for the Association's Sub-branch of Ningxia Writers. Later, he became the Vice-Chairman and then Chairman of the Literary Union of Ningxia (*Ningxia wenlian* 寧夏文聯) and the Chairman of the Association of Ningxia Writers (*Ningxia zuojia xiehui* 寧夏作家協會), a committee member of the Presidium (主席團) of the Association of Chinese Writers, and a National Commissioner of the 6th, 7th and 8th Chinese People's Political Consultative

⁶ Refer to "Nationwide award-winning works since the Chinese New Period" ("Zhongguo xin shiqi yilai lijie quanguoxing wenxue jiang huojiang zuopin," <中國新時期以來歷屆全國性文學獎獲獎作品>) in Ding Baiquan 丁柏銓, ed., *Dictionary of Chinese New Period literature* (*Zhongguo xin shiqi wenxue cidian* 《中國新時期文學詞典》) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1991), 693-721.

⁷ In *Reference information* (*Cankao xiaoxi* 《參考消息》), June 25, 1999.

Conference (中國人民政治協商會議全國委員). Zhang's novels have been translated into twenty-seven languages including English, French, Japanese, Russian, Swedish, Dutch and Polish. Zhang has travelled to America, France, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Denmark and lectured in Universities there. His name was in the record of *Who's Who in the World* 《世界人名錄》 (Cambridge edition), *Who's Who in the Far East and Australia* 《遠東及澳大利亞人名錄》, and *Writers of the World* 《世界作家》.

On 1st July, 1984, Zhang joined the Communist party. In 1993, he turned to business and became the Director of the Board of Trustees of Yihai Industrial and Commercial Development Co. (藝海實業發展有限公司), Ningxia Business Instant Information Service (寧夏商業快訊社), Film and Television of China's West Co. Ltd. (華夏西部影視有限公司), Huihuang Biochemical Products Co. (輝煌生物化學製品公司). His Film and Television City of China's West (華夏電影城) has become a major hotspot for the shooting of film and television programs as well as a tourist attraction.⁸

⁸ For the life and publications of Zhang Xianliang, one may refer to the following sources: "Autobiography of Zhang Xianliang," in *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West* (Xining: Qinghai renmin, 1992); "Short biography of Zhang Xianliang," in *Half of Man is Woman* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian, 1985); "Short biography," in *Short pieces from the edge* (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin, 1995); Author's introduction, in *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang* (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi, 1986); "On Zhang Xianliang" by Zeng Zhennan, in Office of Creative Studies, Chinese Writers' Association, ed., *On Contemporary writers* (Hebei: Zuoja, 1986), 358-378; "Short literary biography," in *Journey of feelings* (Beijing: Zuoja, 1987) and in *My bodhi tree* (Beijing: Zuoja, 1994); "Short notes on the author," in

Zhang got married with his colleague Feng Jianhua 馮劍華 and fathered a son. Now he still lives in Yinchuan 銀川 of mainland China.

2. Zhang Xianliang and the New Period of Literature (1976-86)

Literary historians of Chinese literature have traditionally designated the period from the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the Communist takeover in 1949 as Modern Chinese literature and from 1949 onwards as Contemporary Chinese literature. The division is on political rather than literary concerns. On Oct 6, 1976, the Gang of Four was ousted, signalling the end of the Cultural Revolution. Fictional works responded to the wider socio-political environment of changes and developments. They

Getting used to dying (Hongkong: Mingbao, 1989) and *Half of Man is Woman* (Hongkong: Mingchuang, 1990); Author's introduction, in *Style of man* (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987) and in *Zhang Xianliang* (Beijing: People's Literature, 1994); "Zhang Xianliang," in Zhou Yuming, *Contemporary literary writers in the mainland* (Taipei: Boyuan, 1990), 42, 43; Author's section in "An Anatomy of Zhang Xianliang's literary works," in Ye Zhiying, *Sketches of contemporary mainland Chinese literature* (Taipei: Dongda tushu, 1990), 141-168; Entry of Zhang Xianliang in Ding Baiquan, ed., *Dictionary of Chinese New Period literature* (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1991), 67; "Zhang Xianliang's short biography," in Gao Song, ed., *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novels* (Xi'an: Taibai wenyi, 1995); backcover of *Fictional China* (Beijing: Jingji ribao and Shaanxi lüyou, 1997) and "Writer's words" in *Puberty* (Beijing: Jingji ribao, 1999). On Zhang Xianliang getting into business, see Zhu Qingxi, "Zhang Xianliang turned to business," in *People's Daily* (overseas edition), 12 March 1993, 7. On Zhang Xianliang's life and thoughts in the 1990s, refer to his *Fictional China and Others* (Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi, 1999).

embodied a new cultural and intellectual climate for the formation of a new era of literature in contemporary Chinese history. Mainland critics name the period immediately after the Cultural Revolution, i.e. the decade from 1976-87, as the New Period of Literature (*xin shiqi wenxue* 新時期文學).⁹ This is also the decade in which Zhang re-started his writing career and published most of his major fictional works.

Liu Zaifu 劉再復, in his article "China's literary spirit and literary path of the last ten years", defines the spirit of the literature of the New Period as:

所謂新時期的文學精神，就是不斷否定，不斷選擇，不斷變革，不斷地爭取個性創造力解放和實現的精神。
(頁116)

⁹ Cui Xilu's *An Overview on contemporary Chinese literary studies* (Tianjin: Tianjin jiaoyu, 1990) has summarized the main arguments defining in Literature of the New Period; see 1-39. The first ten years from 1976 to 1986 is classified as one stage. In the mid-1980s, there were various kinds of studies addressing the first ten years of the New Period of Literature. See, for example, "Studies on literature of the ten years of the New Period" ("Xin shiqi shinian wenxue yanjiu" <新時期十年文學研究>) a special topic of the 1987 issue of *Literary Comments* (*Wenxue pinglun* 《文學評論》). The second ten years of the New Period began from 1987 and the discussion of it has not yet been concluded. For an earlier investigation, see the summary of arguments in Tan Xiang, "Reflections as we approached the second decade of the literature of the New Period," in *Literary Comments*, 1 (1987): 44-50.

The literary spirit of the so-called New Period is a spirit of continuous negation, continuous selection, continuous reform and continuous struggle for the spirit of liberation and realization of individual creativity.¹⁰

The first decade of the New Period co-incides with the decade of reform under Deng Xiaoping. The nation was renewing and freeing herself from the shackles of her old Revolutionary ideologies. Literary works also aimed to be innovative. By negating the mistaken track of the past and regaining energies from the pace of the reforms underway, writers vigorously anticipated the liberation of humanity and the rebirth of selfhood in their works.¹¹

¹⁰ Liu Zaifu, "China's literary spirit and literary path of the last ten years" ("Jin shinian de Zhongguo wenxue jingshen he wenxue daolu" <近十年的中國文學精神和文學道路>)," in *People's Literature* (*Renmin wenxue* 《人民文學》), 2 (1988, 115-128): 116; See also Liu Xinwu, "Certain characteristics of Chinese literature of the last 10 years," in *Literary Comments*, 1 (1988): 5-12. In this dissertation, all translations are mine if not stated otherwise.

¹¹ The earnest expectation and request for liberation finally overstepped the limit of the Communist Party. The Anti-bourgeois Liberalism Campaign at the end of the New Period in 1985 and 1986 was launched in response to the situation. See Deng Xiaoping, "To follow bourgeois liberalism is to take the capitalist path" (May, June 1985) and "Fight against bourgeois liberalism with distinct banner" (30 Dec 1986) in Research Office for Documents of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, ed., *Selected*

During the period, Zhang Xianliang made every conscious efforts to write something socially and historically significant both for himself and for the Chinese readers. Themes and techniques of his fictional works developed with new concerns of the decade. All of them embraced the innovative spirit of the New Period. His earlier short stories like "Four letters" ("Si feng xin" <四封信>), "Express no. 43" ("Sishisan ci kuaiche" <四十三次快車>), "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuang zhong se yu nong" <霜重色愈濃>), "In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>), "The Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>) proclaimed an uncompromising negation of the ultra-leftist past. Zhang also made an active selection of timely materials from the changing world of reality during the Reform decade of Deng Xiaoping. His novel *Style of man* (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》) and his novella *Dragon seed* (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》) anticipate the developments in a city and a village brought forth by the economic reforms while his *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》) reflects upon political, economic and ideological changes in a secluded village after decades of Communist rule.

In his most important works ranging from "Soul and body," *Love in a dungeon* (*Tulao qinghua* 《土牢情話》), *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》), *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》), *Getting used to dying* (*Xiguan*

readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum, Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin, 1987), 877-879 and 1189-1192, 2 Vols.

siwang 《習慣死亡》) and *My bodhi tree* 《我的菩提樹》, Zhang Xianliang turns away from the mere reflection of the external world and moves towards the fictionalization of his inner world experience. Zhang's fictional journey shows his continuous progress and his personal struggle for the liberation of humanity and creativity repressed under the ultra-Leftist policies over the years.

In Lei Da's 雷達 "Discovering and re-moulding the national spirit -- Outlining the main currents of the New Period literature," the main stream of literary expression in the New Period is identified in terms of the discovery and the re-moulding of the national spirit. For Lei, the major motivation of the literature of the New Period is derived from the nation's awakened self-consciousness. Writers begin to reflect more and more specifically upon the living conditions and the spiritual state of their nation. They explore tirelessly and eagerly ways to strengthen the national spirit in the contemporary world. To re-discover and re-mould the Chinese spirit is the main track of the ten years of literature.¹²

The main concern of the Literature of the New Period lies in the endeavour of individual writers to strengthen the national spirit. This is also a repeated theme of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works. The more Zhang is conscious of his own existence, the more

¹² Lei Da, "Discovering and re-moulding the national spirit -- Outlining the main currents of the New Period literature" ("Minzu linghun de faxian yu chongzhu -- Xin shiqi wenxue zhuchao lungang" <民族靈魂的發現與重鑄——新時期文學主潮論綱>), in *Literary Comments*, 1 (1987, 15-27): 16.

he discovers his love towards his country and his people. Zhang Xianliang's works are full of passionate feelings and patriotic sentiments. They bear a very close relationship with his life experience intertwined with various political movements of the country since the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. In his words,

我的自我感覺是：我還算是個熱情和堅定的人。在任
何時候，我對我的祖國、我們偉大的民族都抱著磐石般
的信念。這種信念不完全是從書本上得到的，更多的是
通過艱難貧困的生活體會到的。（引自〈文學小傳〉，
見《感情的歷程》）。

My self-perception is: I cannot be considered not to be a
passionate and resolute man. At whatever times, I keep my
rock-hard faith in my motherland and this great people of
ours. This faith has not been gained completely from books,
but more through my personal experiences of hardship and
poverty.¹³

Zhang Xianliang's personal history has shaped his understanding of the national cause. The more he suffers, the more he believes in himself and his country. His sufferings in

¹³ "Short literary biography," in *Journey of feelings* (Beijing: Zuoja, 1985); also in *My bodhi tree* (Beijing: Zuoja, 1994).

the labour reform camps have helped to strengthen the tie between himself and his country.

Nationalistic sentiments of Zhang Xianliang may be seen in many of his works. Zhang's award-winning short story "Soul and body" was highly praised by Ding Ling as a nationalistic eulogy.¹⁴ The titles of *Dragon seed* (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》) and *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》) both refer directly to the cultural totems of China: dragon and the Yellow River. "Long" 龍 means "dragon" and "zhong" 種 means "seed;" "He" refers to the Yellow River (He 河) and its descendants (zisun 子孫) refers to the Chinese. Unlike the "root-seeking" authors like Han Shaogong or A Cheng, he does not "return" to the roots of prehistoric tribes or the cult of regional customs where the essential Chineseness of the Chinese is believed to be preserved. Instead his focus on agrarian society and his use of national symbols in these two fictional works are typical ways to search for the root of Chinese culture.

In *Descendants of the River*, Zhang Xianliang gets his inspiration from the Yellow River, the source of Chinese civilization. The Yellow River is the mythical origin of our ancient culture while agriculture is the basis on which our ancestors built the race.

¹⁴ Ding Ling, "A Eulogy of patriotism" ("Yi shou aiguo zhuyi de zan'ge" <一首愛國主義的贊歌>), in *Literary Journal* (Wenxuebao 《文學報》), 2 April 1981.

In the novella, the spirit of the River is echoed repeatedly in the song sung by the deposed Party cadres:

啊，黄河，你是中华民族的摇篮！

黄河之滨，集合著一群，

中华民族优秀的子孙。

人类解放，救国的责任，

全我们自已来承担. (頁127)

Oh, Yellow River, you are the cradle of the Chinese race!

On the Banks of the River, gathered a group of

The excellent descendants of the Chinese race.

The liberation of mankind, the responsibility of national
salvation

Borne by all of us. . . . ¹⁵

¹⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River*, in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1995, 4-159), 127. All quotations of the fictional works in English are my translations from the Chinese text unless stated otherwise.

Zhang bears the burden of history. By re-examining several decades of agrarian reforms and political movements under Communist rule, he tries to explore ways to strengthen the withering national spirit of the Chinese.

Lei Da further adds that the way towards national strengthening lies in the discovery of man, the awakening of man and the liberation of man. Only by grasping the self awakening of man, this fundamental basis of spiritual development, can one see the various threads of literary developments from the hub. For Lei, every thread shows severe inner struggles. At the same time, there is no ending point for any of the threads, for every thread leads towards temporarily insurmountable obstacles. Self-awakening of man in the New Period results in literary works reflecting the wounds of the victims, portraying the image of the reformers, describing the inner split in agrarian society and expressing the inner pain of intellectuals in a dislocated world.¹⁶

Lei Da's delineation of the New Period could in fact be the most appropriate summary of the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang in the decade. Short stories like "Four letters," "Express no. 43," "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour," "In such a spring," "Story of old man Xing and his dog" reflect the first thread: wounds of the victims. *Style of man* and *Dragon seed* portray the second: the image of the reformers. *Descendants of the River* describes the third: the inner split in agrarian society. The representative works of Zhang Xianliang ranging from *Love in a dungeon*, *Mimosa*, *Half*

¹⁶ Lei 21.

of Man is Woman, *Getting used to dying* and *My bodhi tree* express the fourth: the inner pain of intellectuals in a dislocated world. The fictional works of Zhang Xianliang have fully cherished the spirit of the New Period of Literature in the decade of Reform under Deng Xiaoping. Every thread evolve from and revolve around the same center: the self-awakening of man.

Section B: Publications of Zhang Xianliang

Major literary works of Zhang Xianliang published over the years include:

1. lyric poems published in his early years: "Night" ("Ye" <夜>), "Songs sung after work" ("Zai shougonghou chang de ge" <在收工後唱的歌>), "Songs sung at dusk" ("Zai bangwan chang de ge" <在傍晚唱的歌>) and "Song of the strong wind" ("Dafeng ge" <大風歌>);¹⁷

2. short stories on:

- a) victims of the Cultural Revolution: "Four letters" ("Sifeng xin" <四封信>), "Express no. 43" ("Sishisanci kuaiche" <四十三次快車>), "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuangzhong se yu nong" <霜重

¹⁷ They were all published in *Yan River Literature and Arts* (Yanhe wenyi 《延河文藝》) in 1957.

色愈濃>), "In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>), "Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>), "Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>);

b) love: "Gypsy" ("Jibusai ren" <吉卜賽人>), "First kiss" ("Chuwen" <初吻>), "Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>), "Sunset" ("Xiyang" <夕陽>), "Puberty" ("Qingchun qi" <青春期>);

3. novels: *Style of man* (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》), *Good morning! Friends* (*Zao'an pengyou* 《早安朋友》) and *My bodhi tree* 《我的菩提樹》;

4. novellas: *Love in a dungeon* (*Tulao qinghua* 《土牢情話》), *Dragon seed* (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》), *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》), *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》), *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) and *Getting used to dying* (*Xiguan siwang* 《習慣死亡》).¹⁸

1. Thematic patterns of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works

¹⁸ Many novellas listed here like *Mimosa*, *Half of Man is Woman* and *Getting used to dying* are in fact novels. But in Zhang Xianliang's own classification, each of them contributes to the series of nine novellas in his mind.

On the mainland, fictional works of the New Period are commonly classified within the categories of several major schools: Scar Literature (*shanghen wenxue* 傷痕文學), Reform literature (*gaige wenxue* 改革文學), Literature of Reflection (*fansi wenxue* 反思文學), Root-seeking Literature (*xungen wenxue* 尋根文學) and Avant-garde Literature (*xianfeng wenxue* 先鋒文學).¹⁹ Also available are other categorical labels like literature of intellectuals (*zhiqing wenxue* 知青文學), gulag literature (*daqiang wenxue* 大牆文學), literature of rural villages (*nongcun wenxue* 農村文學) and sex literature (*xing wenxue* 性文學).

Labelling fictional works into different schools and then studying them with reference to their respective schools is a common approach to mainland Chinese fiction of the New Period. The labels give a ready framework for the understanding of fictional works. They help to bring works of similar thematic concerns and historical backgrounds from different writers into handy categories for further analysis and discussion. In this approach, literary works are sorted into certain pigeonholes which name a particular feature. Within each pigeonhole, characteristics of the representative works are listed together with brief introductions of the authors and the historical background.

¹⁹ One may refer to Ya Xian's article "The Changing faces of mainland literature -- different kinds of representative literary works and their styles over the past ten years," in Wenxun zazhishe, ed., *Contemporary mainland literature* (Taipei: Wenxun zazhishe, 1988, 57-61) for a summary of various schools of the New Period.

Generalizations are given to define the texts as well as the authors within the label. The mentality is that of creating an accurate and comprehensive literary historical framework in which all representative writers and their major works are correctly categorized and duly given a place. This is the current method of classification employed in many history books of mainland China to show the diversity of Chinese fiction in the New Period.²⁰

Scar Literature was named after the title of a short story called "Scar" ("Shanghen" 傷痕) in 1978 by Lu Xinhua 盧新華, a student of the Chinese Department of Fudan University in Shanghai. The short story reveals the traumatic scars left in the heart of the Chinese people after the Cultural Revolution. In the years roughly between 1976-79, a number of fictional works on the same theme were published and are collectively called Scar Literature. Representative works include Ba Jin's 巴金 "Commemorating Xiao Shan" ("Huainian xiao shan" <懷念蕭珊>), Liu Xinwu's 劉心武 "Form master" ("Banzhuren" <班主任>), Bai Hua's 白樺 "Bitter love" ("Ku lian" <苦戀>) and Tao Siliang's 陶斯亮 "A Letter sent finally" ("Yi feng zhongyu fachu de xin" <一封終於發出的信>).²¹

²⁰ See, for instance, Jin Han, *History of contemporary Chinese fiction* (Hangzhou: Hangzhou daxue, 1990) or Jin Han, Feng Yunqing and Li Xinning, eds., *Newly compiled history of contemporary Chinese literary development* (Hangzhou: Hangzhou daxue, 1992).

²¹ See Ye Zhiyin's "Elementary investigation of 'Scar Literature' and 'Literature of Reflection,'" in *Sketches of contemporary mainland Chinese literature* (Taipei: Dongda, 1990), 3-22.

After the Third Plenum of the Central Committee held in December 1978 and the announcement of a series of economic and political policies, China started to launch the Four Modernizations programme under Deng Xiaoping. Many conscientious writers began to publish works to reflect the ongoing economic reform and anticipate the coming social changes. Reform literature closely developed in step with historical reality. It pragmatically paved the way for ideological and socio-political reforms accelerated by economic progress. The works usually focused on the role of the reformer in his struggle against the old bureaucratic system for economic reforms. Representative works include Jiang Zilong's 蔣子龍 *Manager Qiao came to office* (*Qiao changzhang shangrenji* 《喬廠長上任記》), Li Guowen's 李國文 "No. 5 Garden Street" ("Huayuan jie wuhao" 《花園街五號》) and Zhang Jie's 張潔 *Heavy wings* (*Chenzhong de chibang* 《沈重的翅膀》).²²

In 1979-83, fictional works turned their currents from critiques of the Cultural Revolution to more philosophical and historical reflections. Literature of Reflection can be classified under two major categories: history of agrarian society after the Great Leap

²² See Zhang Jiong, *Patterns of New Period literature* (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin jiaoyu, 1991), 135-146. Also Gao Wenchi and Chen Weizhong, eds, *Overview of contemporary Chinese literature* (Shanghai: Shanghai waiyu jiaoyu, 1991), 97-119; and Zhu Shuiyong, *Cultural conflicts and literary mutations* (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi, 1994), 77-86. Shen Taihui's article "General comments on reform literature," rpt. in *1988 Annals on Chinese literary studies* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian, 1992, 109-113) has summarized different arguments about the Literature of Reform.

Forward of 1958, and the fate of intellectuals since the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. Representative works of the first kind include Gao Xiaosheng's 高曉聲 "Li Shunda's housebuilding" ("Li Shunda zaowu" <李順大造屋>) and Ru Zhijuan's 茹志鵠 "A Mismatched story" ("Jianji cuole de gushi" <剪輯錯了的故事>); works of the second kind include Ba Jin's "A Record of eclectic thoughts" ("Suixianglu" <隨想錄>).²³

Root-seeking Literature flourished in the mid-1980s in the time of ideological crisis. After the serious political turmoils of the past and the rapid socio-economic changes of the present, writers were consciously promulgating the search for cultural roots as solutions to the endangered value system of the Chinese. Theoretical treatises include Han Shaogong's 韓少功 "The Root of literature" ("Wenxue de gen" <文學的根>), A Cheng's 阿城 "Mankind being regulated by culture" ("Wenhua zhiyue zhe renlei" <文化制約著人類>), Zheng Wanlong's 鄭萬隆 "My root" ("Wo de gen" <我的根>), Li Hangyu's 李杭育 "Reorder our root" ("Li yi li women de gen" <理一理我們的根>) and Zheng Yi's 鄭義 "Across the ridge of cultural disruption" ("Kuayue wenhua duanliedai" <跨越文化斷裂帶>). Representative works are A Cheng's "Chess king" ("Qiwang" <棋王>), Han Shaogong's "Dad, dad, dad" ("Ba, Ba, Ba" <爸爸爸爸>),

²³ See Ye Zhiyin's "Elementary investigation of 'Scar Literature' and 'Literature of Reflection,'" 3-

Zheng Yi's "Old well" ("Lao jing" <老井>) and Jia Pingwa's 賈平凹 "First record of Shangzhou" ("Shangzhou chulu" <商州初錄>).²⁴

Avant-garde Literature usually refers to novels published after 1985 which borrow from modernist and postmodernist writings of the West. Earlier fictional works like Wang Meng's "Eyes of night" ("Ye de yan") and Ru Zhijuan's "A Mismatched story" already imitate the modernist technique of stream of consciousness.²⁵ Liu Suola's 劉索

²⁴ See Yan Jingming, "Changes and developments in ten years -- A Sideview of New Period literature" (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin jiaoyu, 1992), 34-46; Li Qingxi, "Root seeking -- back to the thing itself," in *Literary Comments*, 1 (1988): 14-23; and Ye Zhiyin's "Investigations on mainland Chinese root-seeking literature," in *Sketches of contemporary mainland Chinese literature* (Taipei: Dongda, 1990), 25-41. On the other hand, Wang Xiaoming has very serious critical doubts about the root-seeking writers and their claims; see his "Not believing and not willing to believe -- About the creative works of three root seeking authors," in *Literary Comments*, 1 (1988): 24-35.

²⁵ However, after examining six representative short stories by Wang Meng: "Bu-li" (Bolshevik's Salute), "Ye de yan" (Eyes of the Night), "Fengzheng piaodai" (Kite Streamers), "Hudie" (Butterfly), "Chun zhi sheng" (Voices of Spring), and "Hai de meng" (Dreams of the Sea), William Tay concludes that one can only locate interior monologue, narrated monologue, and time/ space montage in five out of six of the stories. None of them use free association -- seemingly random, illogical, and ungrammatical presentation - - as an ordering principle. In this sense, though Wang's fictional works are character-centered types of psychological narratives, for Tay, they do not fulfil all the defining characteristics of modernist stream of consciousness. See William Tay, "Wang Meng, Stream-of-consciousness, and the Controversy over Modernism," in *Modern Chinese Literature* 1. 1 (Sept 84): 7-24. On the other hand, Wang Meng himself

拉 "You have no other choice" ("Ni biewu xuanze" <你別無選擇>), Xu Xing's 徐星 "Themeless variations" ("Wu zhuti bianzou" <無主題變奏>) and Can Xue's 殘雪 "Yellow soil street" ("Huangni jie" <黃泥街>) have very obvious modernist way of non-selective organization and meaningless repetition of utterances. Stories like Mo Yan's 莫言 *Red Sorghum Family Saga* 《紅高粱家族》, Han Shaogong's "Dad dad dad" ("Ba, ba, ba" 《爸爸爸》) and "Woman woman woman" ("Nü, nü, nü" 《女女女》) and Su Tong's 蘇童 "Escape in 1937" ("1937 nian de taowang" <1937年的逃亡>) are told in a postmodern narrative voice with supernatural features reminiscent of Latin American magic realism.²⁶

If we try to locate Zhang Xianliang's fictional works conventionally into different schools, we can see that most of his earlier short stories published immediately after his re-habilitation in the late 1970s belong to Scar Literature. They include "Four letters," "Express no. 43," "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour," "In such a spring," "Story of old man Xing and his dog." They reveal the traumatic scars left in the

claims to imitate the stream of consciousness for realistic purpose. See Wang Meng, "An Open Letter on 'Stream-of-consciousness,'" Michael S. Duke, trans., in *Modern Chinese Literature* 1. 1 (Sept 84: 25-28), 28.

²⁶ See Zou Ping, "Gradual progress of modernism in New Period literature," in *Literary Comments* 1 (1987): 28-34; and Yan Jingming, *Changes and developments in ten years -- A sideview of New Period literature* (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin jiaoyu, 1992), 47-62. On the other hand, Zhang Fang is rather critical of the fake modernist school (*wei xiandaipai* 偽現代派); see Ch. 4 of his *How I read contemporary Chinese fiction* (Jiangsu: Jiangsu wenyi, 1992), 47-73.

heart of the Chinese people after several decades of ultra-leftist political movements. Important events covered by the fictional stories include the Blooming and Contending of the 100 Flowers to the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the Great Leap Forward of 1958-59, the three years of famine from 1960-62, the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 and the Tiananmen Incident of 1976. The sufferings of helpless victims ranging from Party cadres, intellectuals to farmers, village women and working people are vividly portrayed.

Literature of Reflection can be classified into two major kinds: history of the agrarian society after the Great Leap Forward of 1958, and fate of the intellectuals since the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957. Zhang Xianliang's *Descendants of the River* belongs to the first kind. His major fictional works including "Soul and body," *Love in a dungeon*, *Mimosa*, *Half of Man is Woman*, *Getting used to dying* and *My bodhi tree* belong to the second. In 1985, "First kiss," *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman* were anthologized as one volume under the title *Journey of feelings -- the First book of the revelation of a materialist*. In the "Author's Note" (*zuozhe tizhi* 作者題識), Zhang claims that the volume records the traumatic scars in a poet's heart when the world breaks up.²⁷ Zhang Xianliang's journey of feelings in fact goes beyond pungent critique of the Cultural Revolution and probes into deeper philosophical and historical reflections about China

²⁷ Zhang Xianliang, "Author's Note" ("Zuozhe tizhi" <作者題識>), in *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感情的歷程》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1987).

and humanity itself. They are therefore better classified as Literature of Reflection rather than Scar Literature.

Zhang Xianliang's *Dragon seed* and *Style of man* belong to the Reform literature. Though *Dragon seed* and *Descendants of the River* show concerns about the root and the source of Chinese culture, Zhang Xianliang's fictional works are seldom associated with Root-seeking Literature. *Good morning! Friends* and *Getting used to dying* show the extreme reaches of Zhang Xianliang's fictional techniques and styles. *Good morning! Friends* is a reportage novel of teenage sexual problems and the society's indifference towards them. It does not belong to any of the schools mentioned. *Getting used to dying*, on the other hand, is innovative both in its narrative method and symbolic explorations. There are obvious traces of influence from modernist techniques of the West. Whether it can be classified as Literature of the Avant-garde is a topic for further exploration.

One can see that most of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works belong to Scar Literature and that of Reflection. However, the categorical divisions commonly used seem to be very inadequate for the understanding of the intertextual ramifications as well as the psychological developments shown in a particular author's fictional journey. They could classify and clarify the textual threads described by Lei Da but not the psychological hub where all the threads tend to originate. Using conventional divisions of school like Scar Literature, reform literature, literature of reflection, root-seeking literature and avant-garde literature will merely name one aspect of the work and then

confine the investigations within the given label. The labelling method in fact arbitrarily imposes upon each individual work certain extrinsic restrictions at the expense of the writer's creative individuality.

Zhang Xianliang himself has commented upon the absurdity of similar labelling approaches:

文學就是文學，本不應該劃分成爲名目繁多的種類。但中國大陸近年來的評論界，把一隻生日蛋糕切成若干塊三角形等份。這一塊名爲「農村題材文學」，那一塊名爲「家庭倫理題材文學」，還有「工業題材文學」、「軍事題材文學」、「愛情題材文學」、「法制文學」、「道德題材文學」等等。．．．．我的自由僅限於個人的創作領域。我究竟屬甚麼派，必須戰戰兢兢地站在哪個隊列裏，不由我自己選擇。(〈「男人的風格」自序〉，頁1)

Literature is literature. It should not be divided into categories of various names. But in recent years, mainland critical circles like to divide the birthday cake into several pieces of equivalent triangles. This one is named "literature of agricultural subjects." That one is named "literature of family ethical subjects." Also "literature of industrial

subjects," "literature of military subjects," "literature of love matters," "literature of law and institutions," "literature of moral subjects," etc. . . . It limits my freedom to a certain creative domain. Which school I belong to, in which ranks should I stand on full alert, is not my choice.²⁸

The labelling approach practised by many literary historians on the mainland may overlook the underlying current evolved from the succession and progression of works. It hinders significantly the understanding of the corpus of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works as forming an ongoing journey revolving around the same center: the self-awakening of man. Better organizational patterns have to be adopted to facilitate the investigation of such an awakening in the psychological hub of Zhang Xianliang's self-consciousness.

2. Structural patterns of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works

Instead of classifying the fictional works of Zhang Xianliang by an eclectic choice of contents and subject matters, we may begin with more intrinsic approaches. Henry Y. H. Zhao 趙毅衡, in his *Essential loneliness -- An Inquiry into formalist cultural studies of literature*, has claimed that:

²⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "Author's preface to *Style of man*" ("Nanren de fengge' zixu" <《男人的風格》自序>), in *Style of Man* (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987, 1-4), 1.

文學文本，首先是形式的存在，而不是意圖、主題、創作經驗的存在，不是意義或效用的存在，不是內容的存在。文學與非文學文本的區別，在形式，以及與形式相應的閱讀方式，而不在於內容。（頁29）

Literary texts exist primarily as form, not as intentions, theme or creative experience, nor as meaning or function, nor as content. The difference between literature and non-literary text lies in form and the reading method which corresponds with form, but not in content.²⁹

A work's literariness derives from its form. Only through the physical body of form can a writer's inner consciousness be given blood and flesh. Therefore formal elements should have prior significance to thematic ones. Through the formal elements, one can then derive a more intrinsic pattern for the corpus of works Zhang Xianliang has written over the years.

²⁹ Henry Y. H. Zhao 趙毅衡, *Essential loneliness -- An Inquiry into formalist cultural studies of literature* (*Biyao de gudu -- wenxue de xingshi wenhuaxue yanjiu* 《必要的孤獨——文學的形式文化學研究》) (Hongkong: Tiandi, 1995), 29.

Viewed from the narrative reference,³⁰ Zhang Xianliang's fictional works undergo three different stages: from fictional representation, to semi-autobiographical representation to autobiographical representation. Zhang's earlier works are all imaginary stories with fictionalized protagonists. In the short stories published in the two years immediately after his rehabilitation, Zhang has successfully created the image of certain victims of the Cultural Revolution like "he" in "Four letters," Lu Ming 魯明 in "Express no. 43," Zhou Yuan 周原 in "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour," "she" in "In such a spring," old man Xing 刑老漢 in "Story of old man Xing and his dog." In his literature of reflection like *Descendants of the River* and reform fiction like *Dragon seed* and *Style of man*, he gives us strong leaders of the New Period like Wei Tiangui 魏天貴, Long Zhong 龍種 and Chen Baotie 陳抱帖.

In this stage of fictional representation, Zhang Xianliang is highly realistic in the sense that the fictional language is a truthful reflection of the external world. The fates of the protagonists follow closely the vicissitudes of political and historical events in contemporary China. We have the image of victims in the past and also the image of strong men for the future. Such themes and the content had been repressed during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution. When narrating the story, Zhang Xianliang himself is somewhat like Wei Tiangui of *Descendants of the River*. The nickname of Wei as Half a

³⁰ I use the term "narrative reference" instead of "narrative voice" in the sense that the former refers to the source of the narrator's voice in reality but the latter refers to the persona of the narrator's voice.

Ghost (*bange gui* 半個鬼) has already given some hint. Zhang is half a man and half a ghost, both reflecting upon the past and anticipating the future. He gazes at the historical stream of the Yellow River, as one of its close descendants and also as a sympathetic viewer of turbulent events.

After the stories of reflections and anticipations come Zhang Xianliang's fictional works in the languages of love, sex and death.³¹ When narrating these stories, Zhang is half a man, half a woman. In a disguised voice, he speaks for his repressed self in reality and also for women who only exist in his imagination. In terms of the narrative reference, some of them are imaginary stories narrated from the viewpoint of fictionalized characters. These include Sang Gong 桑弓 in "Sunset," "I" in "Gypsy," and "Bitter springs" and the omniscient narrator in *Good morning! Friends*. Some are narrated from the viewpoint of semi-autobiographical protagonists. These include young master Zhang 章少爺 in "First kiss," Xu Lingjun 許靈均 in "Soul and body," Shi Zai 石在 in *Love in a dungeon*, Zhang Yonglin 章永璘 in *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman*, and the split narrators "I," "he" and "you" in *Getting used to dying*.

The progress from stories of love towards sex ending in the climax of death reveals more and more the repressed psyche of Zhang Xianliang. The realist language of world reflection turns into a self reflection of Zhang's inner psyche. The detached

³¹ I use the word "language" instead of "content" or "theme." From the psychoanalytical point of view, language is a disguise. It is either a substitution or a displacement of the repressed psyche.

narrator of other people's stories gradually becomes a vigorous confessor of one's autobiographical past. Each protagonist is a fictionalized version of Zhang himself. The intensity of emotions involved in the descriptions of love, sex and death are displaced energies of the deepest stratum of Zhang's unconscious psyche. Reaching this stage of the fictional journey, Zhang Xianliang moves closer and closer towards the most feared part of himself. Through the disguised languages of love, sex and death, Zhang can finally revisit his own traumatic past in the Chinese Gulag over the 22 years of labour reform in mainland China.

My bodhi tree (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》) and "Puberty" (*Qingchun qi* 《青春期》) published in the 1990s mark a new stage of Zhang's fictional journey. The two works are no longer stories told from the viewpoint of fictionalized characters. *My bodhi tree* is a diary spoken in the voice of Zhang Xianliang himself narrating his own experience during the three years of "natural" famine from 1960-62 in mainland China. "Puberty" is a reflection of Zhang's personal experiences of sexual awakenings from the early years and sexual repressions in his mature years. Both fictional works are autobiographical and are meant to be an historical documentation of Zhang Xianliang. The narrator/ protagonist "I" is the writer himself speaking and acting.

Zhang Xianliang likes to use the term "journey" to describe his stages of fictional development. He gives his first anthology the title *Journey of feelings -- the First book of the revelation of a materialist* (*Ganqing de licheng -- Weiwulun zhe de qishilu de diyi bu* 《感情的歷程 — 唯物論者的啓示錄的第一部》). In the "Author's

Note," Zhang declares his ambition to write a series of 9 novellas for the revelation of a materialist. *Journey of feelings* is the first book with two novellas of the series, namely, *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman*. The second book in his plan is *Journey towards initiation* (*Wuzhi de licheng* 《悟知的歷程》) and the third is *Genesis* (*Chuangshiji* 《創世紀》).³²

In the epigram of *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》), Zhang Xianliang refers to the series of 9 novellas as "one book" (*yi bu shu* 一部書):

我萌生出一個念頭：我要寫一部書。「這一部書」將描寫一個出身於資產階級家庭，甚至曾經有過朦朧的資產階級人道主義和民主主義思想的青年，經過「苦難的歷程」，最終變成了一個馬克思主義的信仰者。（頁162）

An idea sprung from me: I have to write a book. This "book" will describe a youth from a capitalist family, one who has ever held some vague ideas of bourgeois humanism and democracy, who after a "painful journey"

³² Zhang Xianliang, "Author's Note" ("Zuozhe tizhi" <作者題識>), in *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感情的歷程》).

finally becomes a believer of Marxism.³³

Zhang Xianliang once again stresses upon the term "painful journey" (*kunan de licheng* 苦難的歷程). In fact the journey-motif can be further extended to incorporate his entire corpus of fictional works as an ongoing journey.

Zhang seems to progress from fictionalized representations of others towards a truthful record of the author's autobiographical self. During the journey, the narrative viewpoint changes from that of a sympathetic observer of historical events to a passionate confessor of guilt and shame, then back to a detached observer of one's own past in retrospection. In the process, fiction writing for Zhang gradually becomes an inward journey into his own inner consciousness. All the works of Zhang Xianliang evolve from and revolve around the same center: self-awakening of man. This centering consciousness of the self in its various manifestations therefore should be the focus of any meaningful discussion on the fictional journey of Zhang. His journey is "overdetermined" (in the Freudian sense) by the life of Zhang and events that happened in contemporary China.

In his fictional journey, the inner consciousness of Zhang Xianliang becomes a self-enhancing discourse embodied in different linguistic forms. It is enacted in the

³³ Zhang Xianliang, *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985), 162.

language of reform as in *Dragon seed* and *Style of man*; in the language of *memoir* as in "Four letters," "Express No. 43," "The Heavier the frost, The Deeper the colour," "In such a spring," "Story of old man Xing and his dog," and *Descendants of the River*; in the language of love as in "First kiss," "Sunset," "Gypsy," "Bitter springs," "Soul and body," *Love in a dungeon*, *Mimosa*, in the language of sex as in *Good morning! Friends*, *Half of Man is Woman*, and in the language of death as in *Getting used to dying*. It resembles a journey with five stages: reform, remembrance, love, sex and death. It is a journey towards the self-awakening of man.

Chapter II Approaching Zhang Xianliang: From Historical Reality to Psychological Imagination

Literary studies of modern Chinese fiction tend to borrow critical concepts originally derived from the West like realism, romanticism, (post-)modernism and feminism for classification and interpretation. These concepts have their specific history and cultural meanings in the West. After decades of assimilation and adaptation, in the end they have been successfully localized as conventional terminologies for the description of the Chinese text. The critical practice has been common ever since the New Culture Movement of 1917. Writers are usually given labels like realist, romanticist, (post-)modernist or feminist and then their literary works are defined and understood within the characteristics of these restricted categories. Very often, the terms are simply used as descriptive labels conveniently applied for the classification of particular kinds of writers and their literary works.

When appropriated for China studies, conventional labels like realism, modernism or feminism all function as imported vocabulary localized for pragmatic usage in the new context. In the critical climate of the 1980s in post-Mao China, terms like realism or modernism were part of the focus of a major ideological debate. The Party-sanctioned socialist realism was challenged by the so-called neo-realism or critical realism. On the other hand the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Movement of 1983 and Anti-Bourgeois Movement of 1987 launched by the Party leaders tried to locate fictional works under Western influence, be they modernist or not, as a source of bourgeois contamination. Arguments over literary studies are thus overshadowed by various socio-ideological ramifications in mainland China.

Section A: Realism and Zhang Xianliang

When trying to deal with the most significant literary events in mainland China from 1977-84, Michael S. Duke singles out "neo-realism" as the major critical practice immediately after the Cultural Revolution. This happens in a period of relaxation under the Second Hundred Flowers policy, which gives the greatest freedom of expression for writers, artists and other intellectuals.¹ In his book, Duke examines the realist tradition of Liu Binyan's reportage fiction, Bai Hua's resurgent humanism and Dai Houying's Marxist humanism with close reference to the political climate of contemporary mainland China. The book ends in the discussion of neo-romantic fiction of the post-Mao thinking generation which goes beyond realism into creative realms of self-expression and self-exploration.²

The term "neo-realism" was first used by Lee Yee and Bi Hua to distinguish it from the party-sanctioned socialist realism. According to Lee Yee, the literary movement of 1956-1957 as a response to Mao's Hundred Flowers policy marks the birth of the genre of New Realism. The movement was repressed in the anti-Rightist campaign of 1957, then re-emerged from May 1979 through the spring of 1980 after the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976. It aims to disclose a comprehensive image of the totality of reality. New Realism, or we may instead use the term "critical

¹ See Perry Link, ed., *Roses and Thorns: The Second Blooming of the Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction 1979-1980* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: Univ. of California P., 1984).

² Michael S. Duke, *Blooming and Contending: Chinese Literature in the Post-Mao Era* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985).

realism" borrowed from 19th century French or Russian realism, is a profound and insightful literary movement, committed to the resolution of problems through the disclosure of their existence.³ In the words of Duke, it signifies a renewed attempt to write literature that tells the truth about social reality as the individual writer sees it.

Many of Zhang Xianliang's fictional works are neo-realistic in their commitment to the resolution of problems through the disclosure of their existence. Zhang Xianliang himself claims to be a realist writer who writes with a social mission. In his words:

我所有的作品，不過表現了我對生命的貪婪，總想利用機緣做多種的嘗試，即使是小說，我也不願僅用一種筆法書寫。 我一直沒有想將「作家」當做一門職業，僅靠寫小說安身立命。提起筆我便想參與社會活動，我是把寫作當成社會活動的一種方式來對待。（引自《張賢亮小說自選集》前言）

All my works only aim to present my greed for life. I always want to make use of whatever chance to make different attempts. Even in novels, I would not simply write in one way. . . . I never think of "writer" as a profession nor making a living only from fiction.

³ Lee Yee, "Introduction: A Reflection of Reality," in Lee Yee, ed., *The New Realism: Writings from China After the Cultural Revolution* (NY: Hippocrene, 1983), 3-16.

Holding my pen, I want to join in with social movements. I regard writing as a kind of social activity.

4

The themes and techniques of Zhang Xianliang's ficitonal works change and develop with time. They correspond with the urgent needs of the writer's contemporary historical moments.

The earlier fictional works of Zhang Xianliang immediately after his rehabilitation in 1979 show the direct and intimate relationship between history and stories. One can almost see a living record of contemporary Chinese history under Communist rule. Important events include the Blooming and Contending of the One Hundred Flowers to the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the Great Leap Forward of 1958-59, the three years of famine from 1960-62, the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 and the Tiananmen Incident of 1976.⁵ Zhang has successfully portrayed a panorama of concrete individuals under various political movements of contemporary Chinese history. Helpless victims ranging from Party cadres, through intellectuals to the working people are vividly portrayed. Their fate reflects the various political

⁴ Zhang Xianliang, "Foreword to self-selected anthology of Zhang Xianliang's novels" ("Zhang Xianliang xiaoshuo zixuanji qianyan" <《張賢亮小說自選集》前言>), in *Short pieces from the edges* (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin, 1995, 72-76), 73.

⁵ For a brief account of important events under the Communist rule, see Bill Brugger, *China: Liberation and Transformation 1942-1962* (London: Croom Helm, 1981) and *China: Radicalism to Revisionism 1962-1979* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

movements in mainland China under Communist rule. These imaginary characters are not great Revolutionary heroes and heroines who change the movement of history but numerous nameless and humble individuals who suffer in the course of events. Their stories are not simply historical (actual facts which happened in the past) but historiographical (events which write the Chinese history) as well.

Zhang Xianliang's fictional works tend to be based on his personal experience. Yet they are also the common stories of most Chinese people on the mainland who have similar experience to him. Every Chinese in the mainland suffered the same fate as Zhang in the calamitous years from the Anti-Rightist Campaign to the Cultural Revolution. Their trauma cut and deepened during the years. Scars and wounds were left in the collective psyche of the Chinese permanently. By fictionalizing his experience, Zhang tries to release himself as well as his countrymen from the psychological burden of the past. Fictional writing about the past has become the revelation of a psychological journey for Zhang and his comrades towards the future. In the time of the three-crises in faith of the 1980s,⁶ he re-affirms his rock-hard faith as a materialist. The close tie between the man's nation and his narration makes Zhang a representative of his age.

In his article "On Zhang Xianliang," Zeng Zhennan 曾鎮南 highly evaluates Zhang as capable of reflecting profoundly and comprehensively the spirit of his age. Like most of the intellectuals of his time, Zhang's experience of labour-

⁶ The three crises in faith (*sanxin weiji* 三信危機) are namely: the lack of faith in socialism, in Marxism or Maoism and in the leadership of the Communist Party.

reform camps serves as the blood and body of his later works. Experience in life has transformed Zhang into a man of his time. Zeng comments that:

青年時代那種作偉大時代的代言人的宏偉卻多少有些空疏的文學抱負，經過長期生活於勞動人民中間獲得的豐富的生活經驗的充實，經過馬克思主義世界觀的昇華，就變成積淀在張賢亮精神氣質中的深沉而廣闊地反映時代風貌的文學魄力了。（頁362）

After living for a long time among the working people which equipped him with rich life-experience, after being sublimated by the *Weltanschauung* of Marxism, the high-sounding but hollow literary ambition of his youthful era to be the spokesperson for his great age became sedimented into the ethos and spirits of Zhang Xianliang, into the literary power of reflecting his time profoundly and comprehensively.⁷

⁷ Zeng Zhennan, "On Zhang Xianliang" ("Zhang Xianliang lun" <張賢亮論>), in Office of Creative Studies, Chinese Writers' Association (Zhongguo zuojia xiehui chuanguo yanjiushe 中國作家協會創作研究室), ed., *On Contemporary writers* (*Dangdai zuojialun* 《當代作家論》) (Hebei: Zuojia, 1986, 358-378), 362. First published under the title "Reflecting the spirit of the age deeply and broadly -- On Zhang Xianliang" ("Shenchen er guangkuo de fanying shidai fengmao -- Zhang Xianliang

The moving power of Zhang's stories springs from the way they embrace the spirit of his time. Experience in life has turned Zhang from a sentimental poet of abstract words into a realistic writer of solid existence. The living knowledge of concrete individuals becomes the touchstone for the formation of a literary man. Working with his people while meditating upon their life, Zhang is among those who not only suffered deeply but also thought deeply. His physical journey equips him with specific details of reality while his mental journey takes him travelling beyond the immanent world into more universal understanding of life and humanity.

Zhang Xianliang's works are saturated with historical consciousness as well as the ethos of his time. They are not simply concerned with life but an understanding of life, not simply fate but the cause of fate. The deep reflection upon the interaction between people and history has proved to be the source of Zhang's literary strength. Specific moments of concrete individuals are re-situated in wider historical context in his fictional works. Zhang looks both forward and backward. His novels show his anticipation for the future and also his retrospection upon the past.

In his *The New literary current and the new literary man*, Bai Ye 白燁 comments that Zhang Xianliang is in fact using each of his works soaked up with historical consciousness and modern ethos to indicate the changes and development of life conditions and mental states of his contemporary people. We can see, no matter whether writing about life in the past, or in the present, he always aims to re-present

lun" <深沈而廣闊地反映時代風貌 — 張賢亮論>), in *Literary Comments (Wenxue pinglun 《文學評論》)*, 1 (1984): 46-56.

the vigorous pursuit in life and the peculiar fate of people living in the whirlpool of hard time from the broader historical context and strong themes of his era. He tries to find out both the subjective and the objective reasons for human fate and the causal relations of social life. All the characters under his pen have been immersed in the caustic water of life. With quite an unusual experience, they are sufferers but also pace makers of future progress.⁸

Zhang's protagonists share his own fate. They suffer and struggle with him in the adversity of life. Physical suffering contributes to one's mental progress. As tragic insights are gained from downward turn of fortune, enlightenment of the mind comes at the darkest moment of one's time. Put in a wider socio-historical context, the causal relationship between action and fate transcends one person's individual concerns. Personal problems can be understood as universal problems, for they are encompassed within a broader worldly context of contemporary China. One person's story, in this sense, has become a chapter of the nation's history.

Section B: The Political Unconscious of Zhang Xianliang

Realism focuses on the correspondence between the fictional world and the outside world. Fictional writing is thus assumed to have a direct and immediate relationship with historical events. Critical interest is placed on the external reality being reflected by the literary works. Instead of focusing on the imaginative appeal of

⁸ Bai Ye, *The New literary current and the new literary man* (*Wenxue xinchao yu wenxue xinren* 《文學新潮與文學新人》) (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin, 1994, 272-273), 276, 277.

individual writers, realist critics tend to approach the work as an historical document or sociological study for the understanding of contemporary China.

Yet the creative imagination of an individual writer may mediate and interfere with the relationship. The axiomatic correspondence between the two worlds may not be self-evident or mutually reinforcing. Nor is there any positivistic evidence to guarantee the validity and reliability of the fictitious text as a factual document for historical reality. Language as an inadequate means of communication can never record or reproduce reality accurately and faithfully. Instead historical happenings are usually substituted or displaced into unrecognizable traces either metaphorically or metonymically.

Furthermore, the personal life of the writer may not overlap with the nation's history directly. The unfathomable impact of past experience and the resultant, residual, regressive feeling-complexes may cause obsessional fixations forever invoking desires beyond the writer's conscious knowledge. To disclose the actual relationship between the textual world and the realistic world, between individual experience and historical events, one has to go beyond realism.

In post-Mao China, the term (post-)modernism at first referred to a fashionable technique of literary expression imported from the West. Later it gradually began to refer to a response to the socio-cultural consequence of (post-)modernity. The Four Modernization Programs since the 1980s have brought forth unprecedented changes to the cultural landscape of the Chinese tradition. The increasing pace of commercialization and commodification has dehumanized the

social world and denaturalized human existence to the extent that man has lost his place in the universe. The disorienting experience of modernity has a traumatic impact upon creative minds.

Most avant-gardist works invoke language as a substitute for reality and journey into the inner psyche as a displacement of the external world. Therefore one can easily notice the blindspot of modernism as a critical approach appropriated for the avant-gardist works. The modernist approach in criticism repeats the inadequacy or even failure of the realist approach by assuming an immediate correspondence between literature and reality. There is no difference between the reading of a literary text as the direct reflection of reality and the understanding of a modernist text as the mirror of modernity.⁹ Both overlook the mediation of language as substitution for and displacement of the actual world. How can one approach the inner world of imaginative vexations by investigating the outside world of socio-economic constants? Only an approach which deals with various disguises and betrayals in language and the symptomatic traces of psychological response to reality can address the issue with more accurate focus.

⁹ If we apply Fredric Jameson's distinction between "h"istory and "H"istory, then we can say in critical approach, realism deals with small letter history while post/ modernism deals with History in larger context. See the distinction in Fredric Jameson, "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act," *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1-102.

Feminism cultivates a gendered politics to rewrite traditional and modern China. It aims to re-surface the repressed part of Chinese history. Women are argued to be victimized and objectified in both tradition and modernity. The Chinese tradition under the influence of Confucianism relegates women to an inferior subservience to men. Three generations of reforms from enlightened May Fourth Writers, Maoist revolutionaries and the post-Mao modernist reformers are sacrificing the voice of women in the very name of their salvation. The language of man has displaced the call of women for liberation and independence and substituted it with the grand narrative of modernity about progress and reform. The unheard story of woman repeats itself as the invisible Other in the social formations of Chinese reality. It articulates the unconscious desire suppressed by the ideological apparatus of existed and existing male-centered world.

Feminism is an approach which deals with the undercurrent of reality and modernity. It goes beyond the surface reflections of realism and modernism into an unfathomable layer of socio-cultural experience. It takes into account the elusive function of language as textual displacement and as rhetorical substitute for the psychological truth. In this sense the feminist approach has much in common with psychoanalysis, though the psychoanalytic approach itself has been condemned indignantly by many feminists as male-chauvinistic, if not misogynistic.¹⁰

¹⁰ It is no wonder that a major representative of Chinese feminists, Rey Chow, in her actual analysis of literary texts and film scripts, appeals more to theories of Freud, Lacan, Althusser, Zizek and

Different from the feminist approach, my psychoanalytic reading tries to understand a similar experience of historico-cultural repression located in "the ideological subtext" of the Chinese mind as ethnic oriented rather than gender specific. The hidden story I want to uncover in this dissertation is less the common fate of shared sisterhood than the political unconscious of the Chinese people after the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) as epitomized in the fictional works of one particular writer -- Zhang Xianliang.

The impact of several decades of ultra-leftist policies has left its unconscious imprint framing the cultural imaginary of creative writers of the 1980s in mainland China. Different schools of fictional works of the decade ranging from Scar Literature (*shanghen wenxue* 傷痕文學), Reform Literature (*gaige wenxue* 改革文學), Literature of Reflection (*fansi wenxue* 反思文學), Root-seeking Literature (*xungen wenxue* 尋根文學) and Avant-garde Literature (*xianfeng wenxue* 先鋒文學) all consciously and unconsciously reveal either obvious response to or subtle traces of the same cultural trauma.

After decades of suffering since the Anti-rightist Campaign in 1957 and the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, most Chinese writers try to regain what they have lost, not simply physically and materialistically but also ideologically and historically. What they try to recover is more than a lost physical self after twenty

Foucault than different generations of First World feminist writers like Simone de Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous or Julia Kristeva.



years of wastage; it is a re-location of the meaning of their historico-cultural selves in the twenty years of a Nation's history.

Such a self-awakening of man can be best summarized in the words of Wang Meng 王蒙,

黨重新把筆交给了我，我重新被確認為光榮的、卻是責任沈重、道路艱難的共產黨人。革命和文學復歸於一，我的靈魂和人格復歸於統一。這叫做復活於文壇。復活了的我面臨著一個艱巨的任務：尋找我自己。在茫茫的生活海洋，時間與空間的海洋，文學與藝術的海洋之中，尋找我的位置、我的支撐點、我的主題、我的題材、我的形式和風格。（＜我在尋找甚麼＞，見《文藝報》1980年10期）

The Party has given me back my pen. I am once again being recognized as a glorious Communist, yet at the same time with heavy responsibility and a difficult journey. Revolution and literature are re-integrated as one. My soul and my personality are re-united as one. That is what one calls resurrection in the literary scene. My resurrected self has to face a tough but important task: to find myself. In the endless ocean of life, of time and space, of literature and art, to find my own place,

my supporting point, my topic, my subject matter, my
form and my style.¹¹

It is in such a mentality of revival that Chinese writers try to look back at 20 years of suffering, hoping to re-totalize their schizophrenic psychosomatic self of the past and re-construct their historico-cultural self for the future.

Zhang Xianliang's corpus of fictional work forms a continuous journey in search of a new self. It has fully embraced the spirit of the New Period Literature in the decade of Reform under Deng Xiaoping. His fictional works cannot be adequately classified into or defined under any specific school but are of more general relevance to the spirit of the Age. His works are physically and historically focused but at the same time socially and politically motivated. They are both autobiographical and historiographical. The story of Zhang is also the common story of many Chinese intellectuals who have suffered similarly in several decades of political movements under Communist rule. The controversial debate over the sexual details of his works simply buried and repressed the personal and political unconscious in his text.

Critical approaches like realism, modernism and feminism have been applied to the works but only with partial success and limited applicability. Many protagonists in Zhang's works are psychological projections of the author himself. They represent different fictionalized versions of his own life. By examining the

¹¹ Wang Meng 王蒙, "What am I looking for?" ("Wo zai xunzhao shenme" <我在尋找甚麼>) in *Literary Arts Journal* (*Wenyibao* 文藝報), 10 (1980).

fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang, one can actually unearth the repressed consciousness of a major writer of the 1980s behind the grand narrative of Party-sanctioned realism.

In his reform fiction, Zhang Xianliang self-consciously tries to write in the shadow of socialist realism. In *Journey of feelings*, Zhang claims to write a series of 9 novellas as the revelation of a materialist. But he deviates from his earlier intentions into writing works of critical realism like scar literature, and then even bourgeois sex literature like *Good morning! Friends*, *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman* as identified by the Ministers of Culture in the mainland. The writer seems to be betrayed by his own language into reviewing the Other side of his psyche. In his words,

翻翻我寫的東西：長篇、中篇、短篇、散文、電影
劇本和所謂的評論，我也常常覺得這些文字不是出
於我之手，而是一個別的甚麼人的作品。我不會寫
作。從拍了這張照片後我就沒有長大過。我沒有軀
體。我肉體感覺不到痛楚。（引自〈為這本書寫的話〉，頁595）

Leafing through things I have written: novels, novellas,
short stories, essays, filmscripts and so-called
commentaries, I often feel that these words are not from
my own heart, but from the works of another person. I
don't know how to write. Since taking this photo I have

not grown up. I do not have a body. My body cannot
feel any pain.¹²

Instead of focusing on the representation of reality in Zhang's works, this dissertation aims to focus on how reality functions in the psychological imagination of Zhang Xianliang. My critical reading aims at revealing the hidden wishes repressed under the ideological manipulation of the Communist Party. While the feminist approach pays attention to the victimized woman, I would uncover the unconscious discourse of a victimized man. I share the same critical assumption with the feminists in regarding the concern of sexuality as a political allegory. I also agree with the realists and modernists that fiction is a response to historical reality and the conflicting modes of production, even though I tend to think that the text is an indirect mediation rather than a direct reflection. Therefore my approach incorporates rather than repudiates the efforts of major critical approaches like realism, modernism and feminism which all appropriate to some extent so-called "Western" theories for "Chinese" use.

Quite a number of articles have used psychoanalysis as a critical model or have addressed the themes of love and sexuality. Zhang Jingyuan, in her book *Psychoanalysis in China: Literary Transformations 1919-1949*, has given an exhaustive historical account of the development of Freudian psychoanalysis in China

¹² Zhang Xianliang, "Words written for this book" ("Wei zhe ben shu xie de hua" <為這本書寫的話>) in *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang* (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi, 1986, 594, 595), 595.

before 1949.¹³ In the 1980s, there was even a Freudian craze in critical circles of mainland China.¹⁴ Kam Louie's "Love Stories: The Meaning of Love and Marriage in China, 1978-1981" deals with the manifest content of love and sorts out different categories of love stories.¹⁵ Tam Kok-kan, in his "Sexuality and Power in Zhang Xianliang's Novel *Half of Man is Woman*," tries to investigate the sexual identity of the male protagonist in relation to his socio-political identity.¹⁶

In his "Romance of the Red Sorghum Family," Chou Ying-hsiung explores the way Mo Yan dramatizes the regression of the Chinese race and how the contemporary present represents and makes meaning of the mythical past.¹⁷ Zhu Ling's "A Brave New World? on the Construction of 'Masculinity' and 'Femininity' in *The Red Sorghum Family*" regards *The Red Sorghum Family* as revolving largely around the construction of a kind of semiprimitive, masculine ethos, and an ideal male

¹³ Zhang Jingyuan, *Psychoanalysis in China: Literary Transformations, 1919-1949*, Cornell East Asia Series, (Ithaca, New York: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1992).

¹⁴ See Wu Yin 武因, "Commenting on the Freudian craze in the Chinese literary world" ("Ping Zhongguo wentan shang de 'Fuluoyide re'" <評中國文壇上的弗洛伊德熱>), in He Guorui 何國瑞, ed., *Debates of rights or wrongs in the literary world (Wentan shifeibian 《文壇是非辯》)* (Wuchang: Wuhan daxue, 1991), 372-384.

¹⁵ Kam Louie, *Between Fact and Fiction* (Broadway: Wild Peony Pty, 1989).

¹⁶ Tam Kwok-kan, "Sexuality and Power in Zhang Xianliang's Novel *Half of Man is Woman*," in *Modern Chinese Literature*, 5. 1 (Spring 1989): 55-72.

¹⁷ Chou Ying-hsiung, "Romance of the *Red Sorghum Family*," *Modern Chinese Literature*, 5. 1 (Spring 1989): 33- 41.

subject who embodies such an ethos.¹⁸ However, the issue of sex, love, and virility in fictional works of mainland China in the 1980s can be more complex and its significance more far-reaching than these articles have suggested.

By political unconscious, I refer to Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. In this book, Jameson tries to re-historicize the hermeneutical readings of literary works in terms of his political unconscious. He regards the political perspective of understanding as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation. His argument:

accordingly turns on the dynamics of the act of interpretation and presupposes, as its organizational fiction, that we never really confront a text immediately, in all its freshness as a thing-in-itself. Rather, texts come before us as the always-already-read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretation, or -- if the text is brand-new -- through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretative traditions.¹⁹

¹⁸ Zhu Ling, "A Brave New World? On the Construction of 'Masculinity' and 'Femininity' in *The Red Sorghum Family*," in Lu Tonglin, ed., *Gender* 121-134.

¹⁹ Fredric Jameson, "Preface," *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1989, 9-14), 9.

So to speak, a literary text embodies a cultural history for its understanding. The act of reading and interpretation necessarily has to pass through the traces of previous readings and interpretations. In the process, a new allegorical code is established to re-write old traditions. The struggle among theories for hermeneutical domination and mastery implicates the politics involved in the history of readings and interpretations.

The history of understanding (or misunderstanding), according to Jameson, signifies the cultural repression of a collective Story: "for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity."²⁰ To detect "the traces of that uninterrupted narrative" and to restore "to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history,"²¹ a Marxist perspective of political readings has to be adopted. A literary text *must* be located within a three-layered hermeneutical framework so that its "repressed and buried" cultural unconscious can re-present itself in different horizons of understandings:

(F)irst, of political history, in the narrow sense of
punctual event and a chroniclelike sequence of
happenings in time; then of society, in the now already
less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive
tension and struggle between social classes; and,
ultimately, of history now conceived in its vastest sense

²⁰ Jameson 19.

²¹ Jameson 20.

of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever future history has in store for us.²²

In this sense, narrative is understood as three sedimentary layers of articulations: a history-related imaginary story, a socially symbolic act of class struggle and a culturally embedded discourse emerged from different modes of production.

The first layer reads the literary story as documentary history in the common sense, referring to events happened and re-arranged chronologically or contemporaneously. The second layer interprets the (hi)story as a socially coded larger struggle of class interests. The focus shifts from the literary text to the ideological *subtext* -- a repressed (therefore unconscious) layer of symbolic significations retrieved from the traces of the surface story. The third layer of understanding is the interpretation of the socially coded narrative (hi)story as situated in the ultimate horizon of cultural "H"istory reflecting and repeating the simultaneous influence of residual, dominant and emerging cultural modes of production in the base structure.

Throwing away the rhetorical trappings of theories, Jameson's first layer of reading is what people call realism in critical practice -- though Jameson may not agree with the realists about the function of history in the literary text. The second

²² Jameson 75.

layer of reading is not very different from the gender politics of feminism which claims to retrieve the hidden Story of women's victimization and objectification repressed under the misogynistic social reality and the patriarchal historical construct of man -- though Jameson may not agree with the feminist definition of that hidden Story. The third layer of reading is well practised by Jameson's student Tang Xiaobing in his reading of Chinese (post-)modernism as residual, dominant and emerging modes of post/ modernity.²³ In this dissertation, I would remove Jameson's model of political unconscious from the ideological baggage of Marxism and recast his concepts into a new version of the political unconscious.

Jameson's concentric notions of interpretation have put history at the center, ideological subtext in the middle and History in the ultimate ring. In my approach, I would start from the very individual and reach out towards the larger context of History and culture in the outer sphere. My hybridized model is formulated in the same ambition as Fredric Jameson's to read all fictional narratives in general; but in this dissertation, focused to interpret the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang. Story telling is understood as a socially symbolic act to be realized as a haphazard conglomeration of different discursive layers of consciousness.

In the first layer of reading, the text is realized as the displacement of repressed wishes. A struggle exists between the body and the mind. In the second layer of reading, the text manifests traces of a desiring chain to be fixated by the gaze

²³ Tang Xiaobing, "Residual Modernism: Narratives of the Self in Contemporary Chinese Fiction," in *Modern Chinese Literature* 7. 1 (Spring 1993): 7-31.

of the (female) Other. There is a yearning of the man towards the symbolic woman. In the third layer of reading, the text ideologically interpellates the individual as a subject. There is an identification between the individual and the Authority. In the fourth layer of reading, the text manifests the conflicting moments of Historical juncture. There are antagonistic forces at work due to the co-existence of different modes of production. In this dissertation, these layered readings of sedimentary texts would guide the general framework in the analysis of the fictional journey of Zhang Xianliang.

From the viewpoint of psychoanalysis, language is in fact the symbolic fulfilment of repressed wishes. It is not a reflection but a sublimation of insatiable desires aiming to disguise the traumatic impact of life upon individual psyche. Story telling provides imaginary resolutions for irreconcilable conflicts in life: conflicts between the body and the mind, the self and the Other, ideology of the individual and the state, personal stories and cultural History. The imaginary world of language gives the writer a temporary identity. It interpellates him as a subject in his world and transforms him from the victim of time into the subject of history. However, irreconcilable conflicts in real life can only be temporarily resolved. Wishes could be fulfilled but desire can never be satisfied.

In his fictional journey, the inner consciousness of Zhang Xianliang becomes a self-enhancing discourse embodied in different linguistic forms. Some even reach beyond the conscious activity of the writer. Self is a haphazard conglomeration of different layers of text: psychological, sociological, ideological, political, historical, Historical and cultural. It is enacted in the language of reform like

Dragon seed and *Style of man*; in the language of *memoir* like "Four letters," "Express No. 43," "The Heavier the frost, The Deeper the colour," "In such a spring," "Story of old man Xing and his dog," and *Descendants of the River*; in the language of love like "First kiss," "Sunset," "Gypsy," "Bitter springs," "Soul and body," *Love in a dungeon*, *Mimosa*, in the language of sex *Good morning! Friends, Half of Man is Woman*, and in the language of death in *Getting used to dying*.

In the journey of the self, each language fulfils part of his wishes while repressing the others. Whenever the conscious subject finds a false sense of satisfaction from the ideological mirror of language, the residues of dissatisfaction simply come back and haunt his imagination, triggering off a continuous chain of further substitutions and displacements in other forms of language. The chain of signifiers progresses from the language of reform to the language of remembrance, at first intended to look forward, finally forced to look backward. The languages of reform and remembrance interpellate the writer as a materialist. Then the journey gathers its own momentum travelling towards more elemental forms of love, sex to death. They are the languages repressed by the grand narrative of history and culture. Conscious formulations of the writer have to give way to the free play of signifiers in the desiring chain.

Chapter III The Image of Man: The Ideological Subtext of Zhang Xianliang's Reform Fiction

Section A: Background of Reform Fiction

At the meeting of the 10th Party Congress in July 1977, Deng Xiaoping re-emerged on the political scene and began to assert his de facto leadership of Post-Mao China. After the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party convened in December 1978, Deng set out to rebuild the country after the decade of ruin caused by the ultra-leftists including the Gang of Four. The fanatic model of socialist revolution and continuous class struggle of Mao Zedong was reversed by a series of pragmatic reforms. Earlier, in spring 1978, the reformers had already put forward the slogan "practice is the sole criterion for testing truth." They fully realized that the ten years of Cultural Revolution had triggered a widespread ideological crisis seriously challenging the continuation of Communist leadership. There was an absence of confidence in China's future, a lack of trust for the government and the Party, and a loss of conviction in the rule of Communism.

In the face of these crises, Deng declared a series of economic reforms while insisting on the tenets of the four cardinal principles: the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, Communist Party leadership, and Marxism-Leninism- Mao Zedong Thought.¹ Within these guiding principles, a new political

¹ Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平, "The Four cardinal principles must be insisted upon in order to realize the Four Modernizations" ("Shixian si ge xiandaihua bixu jianchi si xiang jiben yuanze" <實現四個現代化必須堅持四項基本原則>) (1979年3月30日), in Research Office for Documents of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi 中共中央文獻研究室), ed., *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum (Shiyi jie*

framework emerged as "truth from practice." The reform decade of the 1980s epitomized the rise of the Deng Xiaoping line of reform ideology -- "socialism with Chinese characteristics."² There were three major tasks to be accomplished in the decade, namely, to step up socialist modernization and economic construction, to work toward national unification and to oppose hegemonism in the preservation of world peace.

In the name of reforming the government and rejuvenating the Party, Deng skillfully purged the ultra-left radicals and other opponents. As Deng himself refused to occupy any official position in administration at the top leadership, he could persuade thousands of aging senior leaders to take respectable retirement. The abolition of life-time tenure in office also made way for many leaders of the relatively younger generation. The new leading officials were not chosen on the basis of die-hard ideology or revolutionary history, but on their merits of efficiency and ability to succeed, to innovate, to experiment and to share political leadership with others. Collective leadership, a doctrine officially endorsed by the Party since the Communist takeover but seldom practised under the cult of Mao, was restored to some extent. Later, Deng and his close associates, Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, had successfully installed the supporters of reforms in the top party, government, and military positions in major official bodies like the Central Committee, the State Council, and the Military Commission.

sanzhong quanhui yilai zhongyao wenxian xuandu 《十一屆三中全會以來重要文獻選讀》), Vol. 1, (Beijing: Renmin, 1987), 44-61.

² Deng Xiaoping, "Building up socialism with Chinese characteristics" ("Jianshe you Zhongguo tese de shehuizhuyi" <建設有中國特色的社會主義>) (1983年6月30日), in *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum*, Vol. 2, (Beijing: Renmin, 1987), 755-759, 2 Vols.

Deng Xiaoping set down a new realistic order of priority in economic development: rural recovery and free marketing, urban enterprise responsibility system, autonomy in factory management, expansion of light industry, and rational planning in heavy industrial development. Once attacked by Mao, the "revisionist" practice of "three freedoms" (free enterprise, free market, and free private plots) and setting production quotas at the household level became promoted as the official policy of the day. After 1979, China began to welcome Western capital, technology and even management methods to promote economic growth. A joint venture law was promulgated in 1979, the same year when the first Special Economic Zones were established in coastal areas where secure ties with the overseas Chinese community existed. In addition to commercial credit, China also tried to seek foreign aid from countries like Japan as well as international financial institutions including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In the urban and industrial sector, the concept of "command economy" yielded to the new principle of "guidance economy," thereby recognizing and legitimizing the efficacy of the market mechanism. Rigid bureaucratic centralization and political control loosened its grip on the entire planning and management system. Small-scale private businesses were promoted nationally to stimulate production and absorb unemployed labor. Under the new "factory/enterprise responsibility system," the manager enjoyed an unprecedented degree of autonomy in matters related to investments, marketing, pricing, wages, man-power control, and profit distribution. Nationwide wage reforms were enacted aiming to reward higher productivity through offering bonuses and other material incentives while price reforms worked to reflect the opportunity costs and the supply and demand of goods and services. Nonetheless, price reform meant inflation, especially in the cities, which laid the seed for future unrest. Equally significant were the far-reaching reforms instituted by Deng in the areas of education, law, and cultural life.

In the countryside, Mao Zedong's socialist model of the commune was replaced by Deng's policy of "decollectivization." Mao's Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s and the subsequent years of famine had shown the disastrous effect of revolutionary ideology. For Deng, the principal contradiction of society resided in the material and technological bases of production rather than in the social relations of production, as Mao emphasized. A second land reform to return land to efficient tillers reversed the earlier policy of collectivization once practised from 1949 to 1958. The people's communes were abandoned in favor of a "household responsibility system," which legitimized personal initiatives and material rewards. Five years after rural responsibility farming had begun in 1979, the central government finally announced on 20th October 1984 urban production and enterprise decentralization in decision making as well. In rural China, there occurred restoration of township government, elections in local self-government, restoration of rural commerce, investment, formation of commercial companies, population shift from farming to other jobs, and emergence of specialized rural family industries.³

In the 1980s, many conscientious writers began to publish works to reflect current changes and anticipate the coming reforms. Literature of Reform closely develops at the same pace as historical reality. It pragmatically paves the way for ideological and social reforms together with economic developments. The works usually focus on the role of the reformer in his struggle against the old bureaucratic

³ See David Wen-wei Chang, *China Under Deng Xiaoping: Political and Economic Reform* (NY: St. Martins P., 1988); Chang King-yuh, ed., *Mainland China After the Thirteenth Party Congress* (Boulder: Westview P., 1990); Joseph Y. S. Cheng, ed., *China: Modernization in the 1980s* (Hongkong: The Chinese University P., 1989); Michael Ying-mao Kau and Susan H. Marsh, eds., *China in the Era of Deng Xiaoping: A Decade of Reform* (Armonk, NY and London: An East Gate Book-M. E. Sharpe, 1993).

system. Existing problems are revealed and solved. New projects of economic reform are implemented. Conflicts and obstacles have to be removed. Zhang Xianliang has commented on reform fiction as dreams of writers rather than a direct reflection of reality:

文學是現實的反映，文學是社會的鏡子，這長久以來在中國大陸佔統治地位的文學觀念開始被作家們的創作實踐所動搖。每一個寫社會改革的作家都夾著個人的私貨——他們的改革方案、他們的改革計劃、他們的改革措施——登上終點未知的飛機，在雲端裏沈浸於自己的社會改革夢想。因而，文學開始了「自我表現」，或說是「表現自我」。(頁3)

Literature is a reflection of reality. Literature is a mirror of society. The ruling status of such a long time literary concept of mainland China has begun to be shaken by the creative practice of writers. Every writer of social reform has some personal ideas -- boarding the aeroplane of unknown destination and indulging in one's own dream of social reforms amidst the clouds. Therefore, literature embarks on "self-expression" or the "expression of oneself."⁴

Reform Fiction is a wish fulfilment of the collective psyche of the Chinese people in the Reform Era of Deng Xiaoping. After several decades of political disorder and administrative incompetence, people were in need of a strong leader to rectify

⁴ Zhang Xianliang, "Self-Preface to *Style of man*" ("Nanren de fengge" zixu" <「男人的風格」自序>), in *Style of man* (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》) (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987, 1-4), 3.

mistakes of the past and steer the course of development for the future. Representative works of Reform Fiction include Jiang Zilong's 蔣子龍 *Manager Qiao came to office* (*Qiao changzhang shangren ji* 《喬廠長上任記》), Li Guowen's 李國文 "No. 5 Garden Street" ("Huayuan jie wuhao" <花園街五號>) and Zhang Jie's 張潔 *Heavy wings* (*Chenzhong de chibang* 《沈重的翅膀》). Included in the Literature of Reform are Zhang Xianliang's *Dragon seed* (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》) and *Style of man* (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》). In both works, we can see his ideal image of a real man.

Section B: Journey Towards the Future: Zhang Xianliang's Reform Fiction

1. Summary of *Dragon seed* and *Style of man*

Dragon seed (*Long Zhong* 《龍種》) is a novella first published in Vol. 5 of *Contemporary* (*Dangdai* 《當代》) in September 1981.⁵ The story begins with Sun Dajun 孫大鈞, the Secretary and Director of the Provincial Agricultural Development Bureau (省農墾局), reporting on his observation trip to Tokyo, Canada and West Germany. While he is boasting about the prosperity and technological

⁵ For the year of Zhang Xianliang's publications, refer to Gao Song 高嵩, "Chronology of Selected works of Zhang Xianliang Vols. 1-3" <《張賢亮選集》一二三卷作品年表>, in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1995), 696-698; and "Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's works" ("Zhang Xianliang zhuzuo xinian" <張賢亮著作系年>), in Gao Song 高嵩, ed., *Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's fiction* (Xi'an: Taibai wenyi, 1995), 424-433. Also Wei Yiling, Zhang Jingsheng and Yu Ren 魏宜玲、張京生、愚人, comp., "Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's works" ("Zhang Xianliang zhuzuo xinian" <張賢亮著作系年>), in *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West* (Xining: Qinghai renmin, 1992), 466-473; and Beijing renmin chubanshe, comp., "Index of major works" ("Zhuyao zuopin mulu" <主要作品目錄>), in *Zhang Xianliang* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1994).

advancement of foreign countries, his assistant Long Zhong is already thinking about more in-depth structural reforms of the biggest government farm on the Upper River Bank (上河沿). For Long, the importation of foreign technology requires the logistic support of a new (capitalist?) system of economic production and a (democratic?) change in the social organization of man-power. He plans to re-distribute power and resources to workers of the farm. Government officials would have to be chosen from and elected by the people. Wages would be assessed according to the contribution of each individual. It would be a subtle revision of the bureaucratic system of the mainland government whose officials are appointed by the Party and a direct challenge to the socialist commune system which gives equal share to all in a fixed ranking scheme. The innovative ideas of Long are doubted by his superior Sun, resisted by his Party colleagues Zheng Fulin 鄭福林 and Luo Qingtian 羅青田, and confronted by the senior workers of the farm.

Long's reform plan causes two major open conflicts. The first conflict came in the Extended Meeting of the Party Members (黨委擴大會議). At the meeting, Long accused Zheng and his colleagues of ideological confusions and administrative incompetence. He forced upon them his reform project of giving autonomy to the farming enterprise. Luo was dismissed as Head of the Poliburo. Hereafter, officials were to be appointed in accordance with their contribution to the future reform plan. Long's abolition of the fixed income ranking system triggered the second conflict with the senior workers who staged a demonstration outside his office. The crisis was alleviated by the support of the younger generation of workers. The dialogue with Jiang Lu 江魯, the Provincial First Secretary (省委第一書記) and Member of the Party Central Committee (黨中央委員), finally lent Long the necessary government sanction for an experimental period of one year to launch his project. The road towards reform anticipated more future obstacles and resistance. In his utter loneliness, a widow Mu Yushan 穆玉珊 gave Long comfort and warmth. Her son Mu Xinkuan 穆欣寬 proved to be one of the progressive workers, with other

workers of the younger generation, who offered invaluable support to Long. The novella had a touch of romance when ending with Long and Mu holding hands together in face of an unknown future.

Style of man (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》) is a novel first published in Vol. 2 of *The Novelist* (*Xiaoshuojia* 《小說家》) in August 1983 and reprinted in December of the same year by Tianjin Baihua wenyi chubanshe (天津百花文藝出版社). The story begins with the ironic exchange between Chen Baotie 陳抱帖 and his newly wed wife Luo Hainan 羅海南. Luo quotes from *Anna Karenina* and accuses Chen of being Vronsky who did not understand love. Both physical and intellectual contrasts between the two were immediately shown. Though forty-five years old, Chen still looks energetic and ambitious while his much younger wife seemed sallow and unrealistic. One is fully engaged in his work; the other is lost in novels of romance. The story then goes back to a dialogue on a train between the Party Secretary of K Province (K省省委書記) Meng Dechun 孟德純 and Chen, then his personal secretary. When Meng proposed to appoint him as the Party Secretary of a city, Chen asked the full authority to form his administrative cabinet. Meng's appreciation of Chen later made him a match-maker for Chen and Luo, the daughter of his colleague. In a debate over government reform with another suitor of Luo, Wang Yanlin 王彥林, Chen won her heart and became her husband. Afterwards Chen got the appointment and moved to T City with Luo.

As the Party Secretary of T City (T市市委書記), Chen set out to reform the city with his assistant: Mayor Sun Yuzhang 孫玉璋. Sun was an old veteran cadre from the North West who was elected mayor by the citizens. He had good intentions to reform the city but not the courage and perseverance to go beyond customary rules and habitual procedures. Chen and Sun pay visits to various places in the city together. Then they came to a decision on a Park bench. Chen as a representative of the Party and Sun of the government pledge to reform the administrative system and boost the

market economy of T City in the coming days. The first groundbreaking activity of Chen was his direct address broadcast to the public in People's Plaza (人民廣場). He requested the citizens to endorse his appointment as Municipal Secretary and discussed his future plans with them face to face. He gave several promises to different classes of people like building flats for young couples, eliminating unemployment for workers, raising wages for intellectuals and professionals, monetary rewards for competent teachers and innovative technicians. Hereafter, salaries and contributions would have closer and more direct ties. Government officials had to go through quality inspections and qualification examinations. Sinecures would be removed. The public greeted the proposals of Chen with unanimous support.

The speech of Chen immediately intensified inner conflicts within the Party leadership in the municipal government. Power struggles had been there before the appointment of Chen. The Party had already sanctioned a Deputy Secretary to be Mayor of T City. Unexpectedly, Sun Yuzhang won the majority of votes and became the Mayor by public election. The arrangement disturbed the status quo. Important government officials like the Deputy Secretary and his supporter Wu Xigui 伍錫貴 were transferred by Meng Dechun to make way for Sun. Then Meng's personal secretary Chen Baotie was arranged to be the Municipal Secretary. However, the Vice-Mayor, Deputy Secretary and General Secretary of Finance Tang Zongci 唐宗慈 who had worked in the Party leadership of T City for 30 years was still there, together with other important Government officials of his clique.

The ideological difference between Chen and Tang is foregrounded in a discussion in Tang's sitting room. Though Tang agreed that reform was necessary, he insisted that for historical, economic and ideological reasons, it should be carried out bit by bit and step by step to keep the balance of all existing parts. In contrast, Chen regarded economic reform as fundamentally a social reform. Administrative system,

government structure, cadre organization, ideological framework, social establishment and public order had to undergo drastic changes to fit into the new economy. Then Chen asked Tang and his wife Pan Guangying 潘廣英 to make an inspection trip to different cities of the country for several months to gather the experience of reform. As a result, Tang was released from his duty and could no longer become an obstacle for reforms.

Afterwards, Chen and Sun began the reform of the city. They invited Huang Guozhen 黃國楨 to plan the new city development. Huang was a veteran architect who suffered for more than twenty years after the anti-Rightist Campaign for being an engineering intellectual with relatives abroad. His municipal development plan for T City won a national prize in 1980 but the honour was usurped by his superior and the plan was never carried out. Chen and Sun unified the municipal planning, development, construction, management and maintenance into one Department under Huang. Vast construction work was carried out to modernize the city and as a side effect cut the rate of unemployment.

On the other hand, in reforming the bureaucratic system, all government officials had to sit for an inspection examination. Two hundred cadres were asked to write a task essay according to the reform spirit of the Third Central Committee Plenary Meeting. They had to point out problems in their unit and suggest solutions. As a result, many second rank officials like Ma Chengzhang 馬成章 who had never been entrusted with important tasks for their activities during the Cultural Revolution were chosen in the new administration according to their ability. Those who failed to show their competence like Jiang Qishan 蔣岐山, the director of Bureau of Light Industry, were immediately removed from office.

Chen also received citizens in person to listen to complaints and suggestions. Important business plans like the joint canteen corporation proposed by Wang Zhongwen 王鍾文 were endorsed in such a face-to-face meeting by Chen

himself. Furthermore, writers and intellectuals like Shi Yishi 石一士, a close friend of Chen's wife, were highly respected and encouraged by Chen to reflect society and explore humanity in their works. The novel ends with the return of Chen's estranged wife Hainan from Peking and the promise of reconciliation between husband and wife in the coming future. Hainan's pledge to suffer with her husband when the reform plan of Chen went wrong one day gives a moral sense of relief and a practical way of compensation to the efforts of Chen the reformer.

2. Reform of the country

Dragon seed and *Style of man* were published by Zhang Xianliang in the early 1980s during the Reform decade of Deng Xiaoping. They observe closely the spirit of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in Beijing from December 18- 22, 1978. Since the Second Plenum, large scale people's mobilization for the criticism of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four came to an end. China then reached a New Period of development and construction. The emphasis from 1979 onwards was then placed on socialist modernization through economic reforms and technological revolutions. The Report of the Third Plenum stated the spirit of the New Period of Chinese history clearly:

我們黨所提出的新時期的總任務，反映了歷史的要求和人民的願望，代表了人民的根本利益。．．．．．實現四個現代化，要求大幅度地提高生產力，也就必然要求多方面地改變同生產力發展不適應的生產關係和上層建築，改變一切不適應的管理方式、活動方式和思想方式，因而是一場廣泛、深刻的革命。(引自〈中國共產黨第十一屆中央委員會第三次全體會議公報〉(1978年12月22日通過))

The chief task our Party has proposed for the New Period reflects the requirements of history and the wishes of the people. It represents people's fundamental interest. . . . To implement the Four Modernizations Program requires large scale promotion of productivity. Therefore, it necessitates various changes in the relationship of production and superstructure incompatible with the productivity. The change of incompatible modes of management, activity and thought is therefore a comprehensive and profound revolution.⁶

The economic reforms of the Four Modernizations Program under Deng Xiaoping has altered the basestructure of production. As a result it necessitates corresponding changes in the superstructure.⁷ New ways of thinking and new modes of social relations are required to adjust to the progress of the economic developments.

Zhang Xianliang's works embrace the reform spirit wholeheartedly. In "Contemporary Chinese writers must first be socialist reformers," he claims that:

⁶ "Communique of the 11th 3rd Plenary Central Committee Meeting of the Chinese Communist Party" (Zhongguo gongchandang di shiyi jie zhongyang weiyuanhui disan ci quanti huiyi gongbao <中國共產黨第十一屆中央委員會第三次全體會議公報>) (1978年12月22日通過). In Research Office for Documents of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, ed. *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum*. Vol. 1. 1-14.

⁷ The interrelationship between the basestructure and the superstructure is the fundamental postulation of classical Marxism. See Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California P., 1976).

不改革，中國便沒有出路；不改革，黨和國家就會滅亡；不改革，你我又會墜入十八層地獄..... 不改革，便沒有當代文學的繁榮！

With no reform, China will have no future; With no reform, the Party and the Country will be destroyed; With no reform, you and I will plunge into the inner circle of hell again. . . . With no reform, there will be no prosperity for contemporary literature.⁸

Again, in "The necessity to enter a state of freedom -- Writing in the third year of professional writing," Zhang talks about his *Style of man* in retrospect:

我筆下的主人公的行動儘管和某些具體文件規定的條文不盡相同，他還是和中央在政治上保持了高度的一致。..... (頁682)

不管你在藝術上有甚麼追求，都必須先創造一個能使藝術繁榮的社會條件；文學離不開政治，中國當代的文學家更應該首先是個社會主義改革家。(頁683)

I firmly believe that even though the action of the protagonist under my pen may not follow exactly the stipulated rules of certain actual documents, he is still

⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "Contemporary Chinese writers must first be socialist reformers," ("Dangdai zhongguo zuojia shouxian yinggai shi shehui zhuyi gaigezhe" <當代中國作家首先應該是社會主義改革者>), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 648-657), 650.

politically in consensus with the Central Committee to a high extent.

Whatever your artistic pursuit, you should first create the social conditions for artistic prosperity; literature cannot separate itself from politics. The literary writer of contemporary China especially should first be a socialist reformer.⁹

Zhang Xianliang regards reforms as necessary conditions for the comfort of living and the flourishing of writing. A writer must be a socialist reformer whose works aim to spur people toward reform. He is never ashamed of having the message first (*zhuti xianxing* 主題先行) before fitting in plots and characters for its implementation. In "Men rely on their heads, that is, their thoughts to stand," he talks about *Dragon seed*:

我始終認為，「主題先行」是必要的，也是不可避免的。……《龍種》中所有的人物都是為了體現我上述主題設置的。(頁645)

⁹ Zhang Xianliang, "The necessity to enter a state of freedom -- Writing in the third year of professional writing," ("Bi xu jinru ziyou zhuangtai -- Xie zai zhuanke chuanguo de disan nian." <※須進入自由狀態 — 寫在專業創作的第三年>), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 672-684), 682, 683.

I still believe that the message first is necessary and unavoidable. All characters in *Dragon seed* are designed to embody my afore mentioned message.¹⁰

For Zhang Xianliang at this stage, literature is only a means to an end. Political messages come before artistic considerations.

The Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee called for corresponding alterations in the superstructure in pace with the development in the economic base. Zhang Xianliang's *Dragon seed* stages the structural reform in a village while his *Style of man* portrays the administrative reform of a city. Both embrace the spirit of the Third Plenum in their focus on superstructural reform. In the beginning of *Dragon seed*, the difference between Sun Dajun and Long Zhong already foregrounds the contrast between the conservative and the progressive ways of thinking. Sun tends to eye the technological advancement and economic prosperity of Western countries. Long aims for more thorough reform in the fundamental organization of social relations in his own village. The entire structure of administration, management and production has to be transformed. He sets out to redistribute power and resources to the people. Government officials will be chosen from and elected by workers of the farm. Wages will be assessed according to the contribution of each individual. It is a drastic revision of the bureaucratic system, the commune system and the fixed ranking scheme of the socialist country.

On the other hand, Chen Baotie of *Style of man* tries to address the public directly for the legitimation of his appointment. He chooses government officials

¹⁰ Zhang Xianliang, "Men rely on their heads, that is, their thoughts to stand," ("Ren shi kao tounao, ye jiushi kao sixiang zhanzhu de. . . ." <人是靠頭腦，也就是靠思想站著的. . . >), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 641-647), 645.

according to their ability and dismisses those who fail to follow the spirit of reform in the New Period. He offers monetary rewards and bursaries to spur people's incentive towards higher productivity and better quality of work. These are all contrary to the political and economic assumptions of socialism. But they are also the superstructural reforms anticipated by the ideological changes towards pragmatism in the Reform decade of the 1980s.

3. The Image of Man

The success of reform requires a competent leader with strict discipline and practical ability. Therefore reform fiction has to portray the image of such a strong man accordingly. This is also the official requirement of the Communist Government in post-Mao China. In the words of Deng Xiaoping:

我們的文藝，應當在描寫和培養社會主義新人方面付出更大的努力，取得更豐碩的成果。要塑造四個現代化建設的創業者，表現他們那種有革命理想和科學態度、有高尚情操和創造能力、有寬闊眼界和求實精神的嶄新面貌。要通過這些新人的形象，來激發廣大群眾的社會主義積極性，推動他們從事四個現代化建設的歷史性創造活動。

我們的社會主義文藝，要通過有血有肉、生動感人的藝術形象，真實地反映豐富的社會生活，反映人們在各種社會關係中的本質，表現時代前進的要求和歷史發展的趨勢，並且努力用社會主義思想教育人民，給他以積極進取、奮發圖強的精神。（引自〈在中國文學藝術工作者第四次代表大會上的祝辭〉（1979年10月30日））

Our literary arts should exert more effort in the description and cultivation of the new socialist man for more fruitful results. We have to portray the builder of the Four Modernizations enterprise. Show their kind of revolutionary ideal and scientific attitude, their noble sentiment and creative ability, their new face of open perspective and realistic spirit. Through these new men's images, we can raise people's socialist motivation, moving them towards the historic innovative creations of the Four Modernizations establishment.

Our literary arts of socialism have to use concrete, active and impressive artistic image to reflect realistically the rich life of society, to reflect the nature of people in different kinds of social relations, to show the requirement for the progress of the times and the trends of historical development. They should endeavor to use socialist thoughts to educate the people into an enthusiastic and self-strengthening spirit.¹¹

Socialist art aims to portray concrete individuals of flesh and blood to nurture the readers' enthusiastic spirit and self-strengthening ethos. As a result, the image of the new man in reform fiction has to be perfect enough to shoulder the responsibility of

¹¹ Deng Xiaoping, "Dedication for artistic workers of Chinese literature in the 4th representative meeting" ("Zai Zhongguo wenxue yishu gongzuozhe disi ci daibiao dahui shang de zhuci" <在中國文學藝術工作者第四次代表大會上的祝辭>) (1979年10月30日), in Research Office for Documents of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, ed. *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum*, Vol. 1 (Beijing: Renmin, 1987, 116-124), 119.

history. He has to be strong in physique, idealistic in mind, noble in sentiment, realistic in attitude, and ruthless in practice.¹²

Right at the beginning of the story, the physical appearance of Long Zhong is portrayed in a dimension equivalent to the great deeds he is going to perform.¹³ In the Preface, it reads:

龍種高大的身軀蹣在劇場狹窄的座椅上不安地動著。最後，他選定了這種姿勢：將肘子支在扶手上，叉開五指，低下頭，把臉捂在巨大的手掌裏。
(頁209)

Long Zhong's tall and sturdy body was scrunched up in the narrow seat of the theatre, shifting uncomfortably. Finally, he chose this position: he put his elbow on the chairarm, stretched out his five fingers, bowed down his head and buried his face in his huge palm.¹⁴

Long Zhong seems to be too huge for his seat, a metaphor for his greatness of mind compared with the restrictions of his position. Both physically and mentally, the reformer has to be a giant for he is a descendant of the dragon. *Style of man* also

¹² An interesting similarity with the Maoist hero-type in the Revolutionary literature under the official guidelines of the Cultural Revolution. cf. Tsai Mei-hsi, *The Construction of Positive Types in Contemporary Chinese Fiction* (Diss. Univ. of California, Berkeley, 1975; Ann Arbor: UMI, 1976. 7615398).

¹³ However if one thinks about the physical stature of Deng Xiaoping, this "realistic" assumption of socialist arts about the image of the reformer seems ironically untenable.

¹⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* (Long Zhong 《龍種》), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* 《張賢亮選集(一)》 (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 207-318), 208.

begins with a description of Chen Baotie's physical condition. He is 45 years old. From the medical point of view, he has reached the early stage of senile decrepitude. Normally, a lot of precautions should be taken against certain sicknesses of old age. But he has none of the symptoms. He is fully confident in his own physical condition. He has elastic muscles and is still quick and alert in response. He is well prepared both physically and mentally for his country.

The epigraph of *Dragon seed* is a quotation from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, taken indirectly from Karl Marx's *The Critique of Political Economy*:

這裏必須根絕一切猶豫

這裏任何怯懦都無濟於事

Here you must eradicate all indecisions

Here all cowardice is useless ¹⁵

The quotation echoes a reminder from hell. Traditional heroes from the classical epics have to go to hell to get the boon of supernatural existence and then come back for the benefit of the human world. Several decades of political movements on the mainland have also equipped the Chinese people with the strength to come through various hellish ordeals. The strong hero will emerge from chaos and disasters. He will then be decisive and brave enough to face the future challenge of life.

In the novella, Long Zhong has two open confrontations, one with his colleagues and the other with the senior workers. In both conflicts, Long appears to be calm and confident, fully prepared to face any challenge with his strong personality and unyielding perseverance. On the other hand, Chen Baotie has two public addresses, one in his inauguration, the other at the university graduation ceremony.

¹⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* 208.

Both occasions confirm the image of Chen as an effective spokesman of Marxism and a successful diplomat for the government. Both are the descendants of the dragon who show the "style" of Man -- the new socialist man as required by the Party.

Section C: The Repressed Narrative of Zhang Xianliang's Reform Fiction

The conscious intentions and the structural design of Zhang Xianliang's reform fiction seem to fit into each other quite well. Literature is an embodiment of the Party's indoctrination. The historical background of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party convened in December 1978 is more than sufficient for an explanation of the two works. Both *Dragon seed* and *Style of man* aim to give realistic detail to the abstract notions of reform and propagate through concrete images the political messages of the Party. Of the relationship between the historical background and the literary text, a critic of realism may assume that they have a more immediate equivalence. The text is a faithful documentation of its own background and an accurate transmission of the writer's original message. It is a Platonic mirror of reality which reflects, however insufficiently, the external world. Or it is a Lukacsian window of history through which we see realistic people of flesh and blood revealing the social process in its dynamic totality and unity.¹⁶ However, language as a means of documentation or a medium of transmission is neither faithful like a mirror nor transparent like a window. The relationship between historical reality and the literary text needs more critical specifications.

¹⁶ Georg Lukacs, "Reportage or Portrayal?" in *Essays on Realism*, Rodney Livingstone, ed., David Fernbach, trans., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1981), 45-75.

In *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, Fredric Jameson proposes the concept of history as an ideological *subtext*. Here history is narrowly defined as political events or haphazard happenings represented in chronological order. It is not the general background against which a literary work is written, but an ideologically-informed textualized reality which a literary work actively transforms and re-writes. Therefore, during interpretations, the individual work is grasped essentially as a symbolic act. It reconstructs a prior historical or ideological *subtext* and provides symbolic resolutions for real political and social contradictions. The text re-writes its *subtext* in the same way as interpretation re-writes the text. It both enacts and represses irreconcilable political and social contradictions inherent in its historical and ideological *subtext*.¹⁷ In other words, the fictional text re-writes the story of history in order to give an imaginary solution to irresolvable conflicts in reality. Tension is temporarily released by the symbolic fulfilment of wishes in the fictional world. In the light of such a formulation, we could then re-examine the language of reform in Zhang Xianliang.

When commenting on his reform fiction in retrospect, Zhang has repeatedly stressed that he is writing to conform with the political requirement of the Reform decade. The message conveyed by his works is more important than the concern for artistic techniques and creative imaginations. Reform fiction has a mission to portray with high fidelity the new man of socialism according to the spirit of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee. A writer is therefore a mouthpiece of the Party. He speaks for the Party and as the Party. In the process of fiction writing, the writer in reality and the protagonists in the imaginary setting gradually merge into one. Zhang Xianliang identifies himself with Long Zhong and

¹⁷ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1989).

Chen Baotie as a descendant of the dragon, showing the "style" of Man. That is what he means by "the writer must first be a socialist reformer." He himself is the reformer who articulates the Party's voice. Through the mouth of imaginary characters like Long and Chen, he fulfils the wishes repressed for more than 22 years in the labour reform camps. In *Song of the strong wind* (*Dafeng ge* 《大風歌》) of 1957, Zhang Xianliang as a poet claims to be a spokesman of the country:

啊！我要破壞一切又使一切新生呀！

我向一切呼喚、我向神明挑戰

我永無止境、我永不消停

我是無敵的、我是所向披靡的、我是一切！

我是六萬萬人民呀！

啊！我是新時代的大風

聽！我呼呼的聲音裏有金屬的鏘鏘

聽！我宣布

一個新的時代已經來臨！

Oh! I must destroy all and then make all

reborn!

I call forth everything. I challenge the divine

I am boundless. I never subside.

I am invincible. I am ever victorious. I am everything!

I am 600 million people!

Oh! I am the great wind of the new era.

Listen! There is clanging in my howling voice

Listen! I announce

The coming of a new era! ¹⁸

This poem was criticized both by *Yan River Literature and Arts* (*Yanhe wenyi* 延河文藝) and the *People's Daily* (*Renmin ribao* 人民日報) as a big poisonous weed immediately after its publication in July 1957. During the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the poem became an evidence for Zhang's anti-party, anti-socialism and anti-people guilt. At the age of twenty-one, he was then classified as a rightist.

From 1958 to 1976, Zhang underwent twice re-education through labour, one administered restriction, one people's restriction and one imprisonment. Zhang's name was only fully cleared after decades of labour reform in September 1979. Two decades ago, Zhang Xianliang as a poet announced the coming of a great age while he himself represented the people of China. He was the great wind which destroyed the old world and gave birth to a new one. Then two decades later, through the mouths of imaginary characters, Zhang announces the coming of reform in the voice of the Party. It seems that he has forgotten about the 22 years of suffering in the reform camps and now is capable of returning to the mentality of his *Song of the strong wind* of 1957 to be a spokesman of his age again. He says:

我曾踢倒過欄，並且被絆得趴在地上，一倒便是二十二年。然而，便是在爬行時，我的眼睛也總是盯住前面。.....

讀者可以看出，本書的第一首詩《大風歌》的獻詞：「獻給在創造物質和文化的人」，正是二十五年(四分之一世紀)後的今天我們爲之奮鬥的事業——「建設社會主義的物質文明和精神文明」。.....

¹⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "Song of the strong wind" ("Dafeng ge" <大風歌>), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 11-16), 12, 13.

但是，作為作家，我還是要..... 將目光盯在前方的終點上，雖然我還要不斷地寫過去的生活。

I have kicked over the hurdle, tripped and fell onto the ground, and stayed down for 22 years. However even when crawling, my eyes still kept looking forward. . . .

Readers can see, the epigraph of the first poem of the book *Song of the strong wind*: "Dedicated to those creating material and culture," is that today, after 25 years (a quarter century) the cause for which we strive -- "Building material and spiritual civilization." . . . However, as a writer, I still want. . . to keep my eyes on the goal ahead, though I keep on writing about the past.

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Zhang insists that he could still look forward towards the future despite his traumatic fall. But why does he keep on narrating the past? Conscious insistence on reform finally reaches its own psychological *aporia*. It reaches the moment of split when the conscious ego is forced to encounter its unconscious past. Irreconcilable conflicts are only temporarily resolved in the imaginary world. The language of reform still hides other repressed layers of text surging forth to articulate themselves.

¹⁹ Zhang Xianliang, "Epilogue" ("Houji" <後記>), in *An Essential selection of Zhang*

Xianliang's novellas and short stories (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1994, 579-580).

1. Between Body and Mind

Dragon seed and *Style of man* are in fact Zhang Xianliang's imaginative fantasies of socialist reform. For Sigmund Freud, there is an intricate relationship between the creative writer's imaginative activity and his fantasies. The motive forces of fantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single fantasy is the fulfilment of a wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality. The motivating wishes fall into two major groups. They are either ambitious wishes, which serve to elevate the subject's personality; or they are erotic ones.²⁰ Now in reform fiction the ambitious wishes repress the erotic ones. Reform fiction is a wish fulfilment for Zhang Xianliang. It is a sublimation of personal aspirations into the great words of socialism. The fictional voice gives the author the subject position of the Authority. To be the mouthpiece of the Party, he has to repress all immoral thoughts and selfish ideas incompatible with the reform spirit.

The Party requires a particular kind of representation in literature. It rules that literary arts should exert more effort in the description and cultivation of the new men of socialism for more fruitful results. It has to portray the builder of the Four Modernizations enterprise, show their revolutionary ideals and scientific attitude, their noble sentiment and creative ability, their new face of open perspective and realistic spirit. The success of reform requires a competent leader with serious personality and practical ability. Therefore reform fiction has to portray the image of such a strong man accordingly. He has to be perfect enough to shoulder the responsibility of history. The reformer has to be strong in physique, idealistic in mind, noble in sentiment, realistic in attitude, and ruthless in practice. Under such a Party sanctioned formulation, some parts of humanity are repressed.

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day Dreaming," in *Art and Literature*, Albert Dickson, ed., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1985), 134.

Therefore, the new men of socialism in *Dragon seed* and *Style of man* have both forgotten their sexual life and sacrificed their family relationships for the cause of reform. Long Zhong is a widower. He had married when he was 35 years old. His wife was a secondary school teacher. She gave birth to a girl the following year. When the Cultural Revolution started, his wife committed suicide in August 1966 out of fears about her family background. Now Long is fifty years old with a daughter. Sun's wife keeps on introducing girls to him but he refuses all of them.²¹ Finally, in the end he finds a new lover. In his utter loneliness, a widow Mu Yushan 穆玉珊 gives Long comfort and warmth. Her son Mu Xinkuan 穆欣寬 proves to be one of the progressive workers, with other workers of the younger generation, who offers invaluable support to Long. The novella has a touch of romance when ending with Long and Mu holding hands together in face of an unknown future.

Love, not to mention sex, is a psychological compensation for the reformer in the failure of reform. A woman has to be there giving the reformer comfort and assurance. The relationship is not so necessary if the project works out. Zhang Xianliang, in an essay of self-criticism "Men rely on their heads, that is, their thoughts to stand" says:

第三個教訓是追求戲劇性，引進了不必要的愛情，
而對愛情又沒作細緻的處理。（頁646）

²¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* 212.

The third lesson is the writing of an unnecessary love affair for the sake of drama, but without love a full and detailed treatment.²²

For an ideal reformer, love is not necessary. He relies on his thoughts, not his body to stand up in the world as a descendant of the dragon.

The other reformer, Chen Baotie of *Style of man*, is sexually apathetic. He is forty-five years old, still fit for his country, but no longer fit in bed. Although his wife Luo Hainan looks sallow and unrealistic, she seems to be psychologically ready to betray him at any moment. *Anna Karenina*, Luo's favourite novel, is about such an unfaithful wife. Chen had two marriages. His first wife came from a farming village. She never won his love and he never deserted her. She gave birth to a son later. In 1974, she died of tuberculosis.²³ Marriage does not bring happiness for Chen. He agrees with Hegel that love is only a process of feelings. It has a beginning and an end: beginning with something beautiful, ending with something miserable. Yet it is such a process which makes all the difference.²⁴ In the eyes of Luo, Chen is one who is incapable of love:

這個死鬼還待在他的書房裏。每天晚上都要待到十二點、一點，有多少時間是留給我的呢？除了吃飯，簡直就等於不見面，而吃是要用嘴用手的，既

²² Zhang Xianliang, "Men rely on their heads, that is, their thoughts to stand" ("Ren shi kao tounao, ye jiushi kao sixiang zhanzhu de. . . ." <人是靠頭腦，也就是靠思想站著的. . . >), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 641-647), 646.

²³ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man*, in Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 149-523), 212.

²⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 164, 165.

說不了甚麼話，又做不了甚麼溫存的動作。原來以爲跟他結了婚，就能享受柔情繾綣的愛情，殊不知，嫁給一個有事業心的政治家是最大的不幸！（頁203）

The bugger is still lingering in his study. Every night till twelve or one. How much time does that leave for me? Apart from meal times, it is just as if we didn't see each other at all. Eating involves using the mouth and hands. So there is no conversation or tender gestures. In the beginning, I thought of enjoying the tender touch of love after marriage. Quite unexpectedly, marrying a career-oriented politician is the greatest misfortune.²⁵

In fact, husband and wife are sleeping in the same bed, but dreaming different dreams. The "style" of Man is shown at the expense of the opposite sex. The greatness of the mind is demonstrated through the sacrifice of the body.

2. Between Self and the "o"ther²⁶

Reform fiction has a mission to portray with high fidelity the new man of socialism according to the spirit of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee. In his portrayal of reformers, Zhang Xianliang can never resist his own admiration of his characters Long Zhong and Chen Baotie:

²⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 203.

²⁶ Here small letter "other" refers to the ego ideal. See Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and The Id," in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, Anna Freud, comp., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1986, 439-483), 452-46.

這樣的男人，最終總會獲得女人的愛情。（頁444）

This kind of man will finally win a woman's love. ²⁷

陳抱帖這種人現在正符合了時代的要求。他們至少能領二十年的風騷。（頁523）

Men like Chen Baotie at this time precisely fulfil the requirements of the age. They will be able to stay in the ascendant for at least 20 years. ²⁸

This kind of man is Zhang Xianliang's ego ideal. Zhang identifies himself with Long and Chen as a descendant of the dragon, showing the "style" of a socialist new man. Such a mirror stage of mis/ recognition gives him a new identity and a new voice.

For Jacques Lacan, the psychological process of subject-formation progresses from the Imaginary Stage to the Symbolic Stage. In the Imaginary Stage, the infant regards the mother as part of itself. It is still unable to recognize itself as a self coherent body. The notion of self is fragmentary. At the age of one and a half, the infant reaches the Mirror Stage. From the narcissistic contemplation of oneself through the opposite image of the mirror, the notion of a unified subject is formed. The ideal ego gives the infant a false sense of unity and completeness. Then in the Symbolic Stage, the intrusion of language by the Father's Law begins the desiring chain of substitutions and displacements. The Symbolic Stage is the moment when the Oedipus Complex -- a child's love instinct directed towards the mother and death instinct towards the father -- is repressed under the Name of the Father (*nom du père*) which is also the NO of the father (*non du père*). It forbids the desire of the infant

²⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 444.

²⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 523.

towards the (m)Other to come to the surface. The infant has to suffer from the trauma of separation hereafter. When it grows up, it is doomed to find substitutes for its psychological Lack. Desire is what cannot be satisfied. The mistaken sense of security about oneself will sooner or later be demolished.²⁹

After twenty-two years of suffering in the labour reform and exile, Zhang Xianliang's self image was shattered to pieces. Psychologically, he had to re-start from the infant stage again for a renewed recognition of himself. Fictional works gave him a chance to rebuild a satisfying self image. In the imaginary world of fiction, Zhang chooses to be a reformer. Through the mouths of Long Zhong and Chen Baotie, Zhang becomes a spokesman of the Party. In the name of reform, he has successfully repressed the yearning for love and sex. He insists on looking forward rather than looking back. However, the past simply comes back to haunt his consciousness. After the two reform novels, we see more and more works of Zhang written in the form of remembrance. The desire for love(-making) later becomes the major concern of all his important fictional works. The identificatory gaze with the ego ideals can only give him a false sense of satisfaction. He is not the reformer. The moment of split (*Spaltung*) already happens in his *Style of man*, the scene when Chen Baotie meets the writer Shi Yishi 石一士, the potential adulterer of his wife. In the end, the voice of the Party gives way to the voice of a writer. Zhang is no longer the reformer. He is only a poor writer waiting for the patronage of the Party Secretary in his shabby hut.

Under the gaze of Chen Baotie, Shi Yishi begins a self-reflective moment exposing the same anxiety of the writer at that time. This is also the time when Zhang Xianliang discovers the limitation of himself as a writer of reform:

²⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, Alan Sheridan, trans., (London: Routledge, 1977).

寫經濟改革？現在寫改革的作品都是這樣：一個廠長，或者一個書記，到了一個新的單位，大刀闊斧地推行改革，於是，就招來對立面的反對，或是告狀，或是造謠。這中間再加一點愛情的佐料，要麼是個獨身的女工程師，要麼是個寡婦。最後，總是以這個廠長或書記的勝利告終。這樣的東西已經形成了一個套子。我覺得再寫也沒意思。（頁445）

Write about economic reform? Nowadays works on reform are all the same: a factory manager or a Secretary comes to a new unit and launches big scale reforms. As a result, it causes the objection of the opposite party, fighting back sometimes by complaints, sometimes through rumours. In amongst all these, some flavour of love is added, either in the form of an unmarried female engineer or a widow. Finally it always ends in the success of this factory manager or Secretary. This kind of thing has become a stereotype. I don't feel any necessity to write on the same theme any more.³⁰

Then what should be written? Eight years of labour reform have not only damaged Shi's body but also leave indelible scars in his mind. Cancers and skin-burns could be healed, but the damage to the mind and the distortion of personality cannot be recovered. He wants to rebuild his life. But what can he write?

但是，寫甚麼呢？

³⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 445.

他逐漸發覺，除了過去那段黑暗的生活，他可說是一無所知。（頁439, 440）

But, what can be written?

He gradually discovers that besides the gloomy life of the past, he knows nothing.³¹

This is also the dilemma of Zhang Xianliang. The only way to look forward is by looking back towards the past. The language of reform finally gives way to the language of remembrance in the next stage of Zhang's fictional journey.

3. Between personal wishes and socialist ideology

Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic reforms in the 1980s made an abrupt break with the Revolutionary spirit of Mao for continuous class struggle and abolished collectivism under the socialist system based on the Russian model. Therefore it required drastic adjustment of Marxist principles, the ruling ideology of the so-called socialist country, to the new situation. Deng Xiaoping has officially announced the four cardinal principles: the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, Communist Party leadership, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Within these guiding principles, the reform ideology, "socialism with Chinese characteristics," was set up as the hegemonic tenet for post-Mao China. Zhang Xianliang is never tired of repeating the same doctrines in his text again and again.

Both *Dragon seed* and *Style of man* contain lengthy speeches on adherence to Marxism and the continuation of its hegemony in the ideological field. In his

³¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 439, 440.

dialogue with Jiang Lu 江魯, the Provincial First Secretary (省委第一書記) and Party Member of the Central Committee (黨中央委員), Long says:

我認為，馬克思主義只有被壓迫者能理解。過去，我是被壓迫者，但還看不懂馬克思的書。後來我能看下去了，社會地位卻起了變化，只學了一點皮毛。文化大革命最大的好處就是重又把我們變成了被壓迫者。我開始理解一點馬克思主義，還是從文化大革命開始的。（頁307）

I think, Marxism can only be understood by the oppressed. In the past, I was of the oppressed, but still unable to understand the books of Karl Marx. Later I was able to continue reading them, but my social status had changed, and I learnt only superficial bits and pieces. The greatest advantage of the Cultural Revolution is that it once again turned us into the oppressed. My little understanding of Marxism began with the Cultural Revolution.³²

Long is claiming the advantages of the Cultural Revolution. The movement turned him into the oppressed and therefore helped him understand Marxism. This echoes the claim of Zhang Xianliang who aims to become the most devout follower of Marxism through his fictional journey.

On the other hand, Chen Baotie also re-affirms his rock-hard belief in Marxism at the university graduation ceremony:

³² Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* 307.

不過，不讓我講馬克思主義，我卻不能奉命。我們並不切實際地要求中華人民共和國全體公民都是馬克思主義者，但我們絕對地要求每一個共產黨員一定是信仰馬克思主義的人。作為中國共產黨的一個市委書記，我不講我信仰的馬克思主義，講甚麼呢？(頁467)

But if you don't allow me to speak of Marxism, I cannot accept that. We are not unrealistically requiring all people of the People's Republic to be Marxists. But we definitely require every Communist Party member to believe in Marxism. As the Municipal Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, besides talking about Marxism which I believe, what else can I talk about? ³³

我們中國共產黨，在過去很長一段時間裏犯了錯誤。這種令人痛心的錯誤給馬克思主義的聲譽造成了極為不好的影響。從三中全會直到今天我們學習的十二大文件，我們黨一直在作自我批評，一直在努力改正錯誤，挽救和彌補以前的錯誤所造成的損失。．．．．．我們黨過去的錯誤，與馬克思主義無關，恰恰是從左的方面背離了馬克思主義的結果。
(頁468)

We the Communist Party, for quite a long time in the past, have made mistakes. These heartbreaking mistakes have had an extremely bad influence on the

³³ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 467.

reputation of Marxism. From the Third Plenum till now, when we are studying the documents of the Twelfth Congress, our Party has been continually making self-criticisms. We have been trying hard to rectify our mistakes, to redeem and compensate the losses caused by past mistakes. . . . The past mistakes of our Party have nothing to do with Marxism. Instead they are the result of Leftism which betrayed Marxism.³⁴

Besides Marxism, Chen can have nothing else to say. It is Marxism which hails and interpellates him as a subject. It locates him in his world and gives him the power to speak in the voice of the Party.

Marxism works as the hegemonic ideology of reform fiction. In the cultural ideological state apparatus of literature, the reform ideology is shaped. Louis Althusser's notion of ideology functions in the form of apparatuses. In his article "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," Althusser postulates a plurality of Ideological State Apparatuses: the religious ISA, the educational ISA, the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA, the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA, the cultural ISA, etc. Unlike the State apparatus which can be experienced in tangible forms of repressive agencies, the Ideological State Apparatuses function unconsciously, being already installed and inscribed in various institutionalized social practices. Ideology exists and can only exist in a material ideological apparatus, prescribing material practices governed by a material ritual. It is the system of representation by which "men represent their real conditions of

³⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 468.

existence to themselves in an imaginary form."³⁵ Through an ideological mirror, individuals are hailed and interpellated as subjects. Ideology is the unconscious means of structuration by which men mis/understand their world and locate themselves in society.

The imaginary voice of the Party in fictional works has given Zhang Xianliang a touch of power, a feel for status and a sense of achievement he lacks in reality. It is a wish fulfilment, a substitute for his lack and a resolution for irreconcilable conflicts in real life. The voice interpellates him as a subject in his world. In the midst of changes in the Reform decade, he is the one who insists upon the Four cardinal principles of Deng Xiaoping. However, the fulfilment of wish at one level has repressed another layer of text in the unconscious. Fears and anxieties are still lurking behind the surface and momentary success of the reformers in Zhang Xianliang's imaginary world. The same worries and doubts were equally strong in the collective unconscious of the Chinese people in the 1980s. In the voice of the character/ writer Shi Yishi, Zhang expresses this concern:

他會不會犯錯誤？他肯定會犯錯誤！具有他那種氣質的人，如果在思想行為上順應了時代潮流，符合了時代的要求，他就是個創業者，一個開創新局面的人。反之，則不但會犯錯誤，還會闖大禍的。你沒有看到歷史上有這樣的事嗎？創業者和闖大禍的是同一個人！（頁522，523）

Will he make mistakes? He surely will! People with his kind of spirit, if in thoughts and behaviour, he fits

³⁵ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Ben Brewster, trans., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, 127-186), 163.

into the tide, he will be a builder of enterprise, one who makes new prospects. Otherwise, not only will he make mistakes, but also big errors. Haven't you seen things like this happen in history? Enterprise builder and bringer of disaster are one and the same person.³⁶

Once the reform spirit ebbs, the enemies of reform will come back in power again. The fear and anxiety simply shows that there are still ideological gaps in the absolute certainties of the ruling ideology. The hegemony of Marxism cannot recover the lack of faith hiding in people's minds.

4. Between Conflicting Modes of Production in the Historical Juncture of Reform

Deng Xiaoping set down a new realistic order of priority in economic development: rural recovery and free marketing, urban enterprise responsibility system, autonomy in factory management. Once attacked by Mao, the "revisionist" practices of "three freedoms" (free enterprise, free market, and free private plots) became promoted as the official policy of the day. In the urban and industrial sector, the concept of "command economy" yielded to the new principle of "guidance economy," thereby recognizing and legitimizing the efficacy of the market mechanism. Rigid bureaucratic centralization and political control loosened its grip on the entire planning and management system. Under the new "factory/ enterprise responsibility system," the manager enjoyed an unprecedented degree of autonomy in matters related to investments, marketing, pricing, wages, man-power control, and profit distribution.

³⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 522, 523.

In the countryside, Mao Zedong's socialist model of the commune was replaced by Deng's policy of "decollectivization." A second land reform to return land to the efficient tillers reversed the earlier policy of collectivization once practised from 1949 to 1958. The people's communes were abandoned in favor of a "household responsibility system," which legitimized personal initiatives and material rewards. Five years after rural responsibility farming had begun in 1979, the central government finally announced on 20 th October 1984 urban production and enterprise decentralization in decision making as well. In rural China, there occurs restoration of township government, elections in local self-government, restoration of rural commerce, investment, formation of commercial companies, population shift from farming to other jobs, and emergence of specialized rural family industries.

All the practical procedures in the implementation of reform in decentralization and decollectivization result in the delegation of power to the people. Modernization and westernization have caused a certain degree of freedom and democratization in all sectors ranging from agriculture to industry, from politics to commerce. In *Dragon seed*, the socialist reformer mentions that:

我要搞的，用一句話來說就是：把企業的經濟權力
交給生產勞動者！（頁217）

What I want to do is in one phrase: deliver the economic
power of the enterprise to the production workers! ³⁷

改革的具體辦法是甚麼呢？就是把自主權直接下放
給基層全體工人。（頁236）

³⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* 217.

What is the practical way of reform? It is to give autonomy directly to all the workers at the base level.³⁸

The change in the mode of production finally necessitates the re-distribution of power in the superstructure of social relations. On the other hand, the image of Chen Baotie imitates that of a western diplomat. His inaugural address to the public begins with hailing the people as the master of the country. His democratic image is realized by the public in an analogy with American presidents:

是卡特發表國情咨文，還是里根發表就職演說！
(頁258)

Is it Carter's State of the Nation Address, or Reagan's inaugural address?³⁹

The full implementation of the reform spirit cannot avoid causing serious ideological conflicts and power struggles among existing parties, among those with vested interests in the old and new systems. In *Dragon seed*, there are open confrontations between Long and his colleagues. Workers of the farm are also divided into opponents from the senior and supporters from the younger generation. In *Style of man*, Chen avoids and delays the conflict temporarily by sending his opponents away for an inspection trip. A reading of the situation from the modernist assumption, like Tang Xiaobing, may interpret the situation as a conflict between the residual, dominant and emergent modes of production.

Fredric Jameson's notion of History in the sense of a collective human struggle and as a process of socio-cultural contradictions becomes the ultimate

³⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Dragon seed* 236.

³⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Style of man* 258.

possibility for human understandings. At the ultimate horizon of History, the literary text as embedded within a larger socio-cultural process is re-considered in terms of conflicting modes of production. The individual text is "crisscrossed and intersected by a variety of impulses from contradictory modes of cultural production all at once."

⁴⁰ It reaches the moment when the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very centre of political, social, and historical life. It marks the juncture of competition between the dominant mode of production with sedimented layers of archaic structures and emergent means of new productive schemes. Ideological conflicts in both *Dragon seed* and *Style of man* are in fact the result of the socialist mode of production in conflict with the capitalist mode of modernity. Conflicting modes of production bring forth conflicting modes of ideologies.

The words of Zhang Xianliang may summarize the situation appropriately:

「改革文學」的興起，當然是剛剛起步的民主化的產物——不管說了有用無用，畢竟讓人說話了——但又反過來大大促進了民主化的進程，被長期禁錮的人民需要勇敢的思想家送來新鮮的信息。而勇敢的思想家們此時還只有一個麥克風，這便是文學。如果說文學作品是「教科書」的話，改革文學的「教科書」恰恰起了以前的教科書反教育的效果。（引自〈「男人的風格」自序〉，頁3）

The rise of reform literature, is of course the product of the newly started democratization -- whether it is useful

⁴⁰ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1989).

to talk about it or not, it at least gives a chance for people to speak -- and on the other hand it greatly facilitates the development of democratization. Those under long imprisonment need brave thinkers to deliver fresh news. And brave thinkers then can only have one microphone. This is literature. If we say literary works are textbooks for education, then the textbook of reform literature serves precisely the function of reverse education of previous textbooks.⁴¹

Reform fiction can be defined as the wish fulfilments of mainland writers and readers in the face of modernization and westernization in the Historical juncture of the Reform Era of the 1980s. However, wish fulfilment at one level may mean other forms of repression in the unconscious psyche. Desire is what cannot be satisfied. Zhang's conscious insistence on looking forward finally collapses into the language of remembrance in the next stage of his fictional journey.

⁴¹ Zhang Xianliang, "Author's Preface of *Style of man*" ("Nanren de fengge' zixu" <男人的风格自序>), in *Style of man* (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987, 1-4), 3.

Chapter IV Desire of/ for the Other: Women and Self in the Repressed Stories of Love

Section A: Journey to the Past: Repressed Love in Zhang Xianliang's Stories of Remembrance

Included in Zhang Xianliang's stories of remembrance are his "Four letters" ("Si feng xin" <四封信>), "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuang zhong se yu nong" <霜重色愈浓>), "In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>), "Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>) and *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》). Even though they are fictional stories about imaginary characters, they still give a faithful picture of reality. Most of the protagonists are passive victims of historical events. The narrative voice is sometimes detached and philosophical, sometimes sympathetic and involved. In the language of remembrance, Zhang presents a living record of contemporary Chinese history under Communist rule. By re-examining the recent history of his nation, he tries to meditate upon ways to rejuvenate the withered spirit of the Chinese after the destructive years of various political movements.

Zhang always wishes to be a spokesman for his time. Storytelling endows him with a voice to speak and a power to judge. The creative activity hails him as a subject of history rather than as a victim of events. He is half a man living in the present, half a ghost living in the past. However, such a conscious formulation of the bigger self cannot hide the contradictory desires of the lesser self for personal unity

and security. Beneath the grand narrative of historical reviews and cultural reflections, there is a repressed layer of humanity yearning to be released. It is a desire written in the language of love. Love stories at first occupy an insignificant place in the margin of the fictional framework of remembrance until finally they gather enough momentum to be the next nodal point of Zhang's fictional journey. In the imaginary encounter with the female Other, the ghost of the past can be expiated. With the symbolic baptism of love from the opposite sex, the self can be unified and complete. He can then be a full man. The following account aims to unearth the love stories of Zhang repressed under the language of remembrance.

Zhang Xianliang's "Four letters" ("Si feng xin" <四封信>) was first published in the January issue of *Literary Arts of Ningxia* (*Ningxia wenyi* 《寧夏文藝》) in 1979. The short story begins with the death of a nameless "he" in hospital. A "she" (probably his wife) is in sorrow, mourning the dead and reflecting upon the past. Then she discovered a pack of tattered letters. They are sent to her secretly from him in the cow-shed (*niupeng* 牛棚). ¹ The first letter is a memo listing his needs: a quilt, the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* 《毛澤東選集》, eating utensils and toiletries. On the back are three words: "I am fine" (*wo hen hao* 我很好).

¹ For a better understanding of the special terms used during the Cultural Revolution, refer to Yan Jiaqi, and Gao Gao 嚴家其，高皋, eds., *China during the ten years of Cultural Revolution*. (Hongkong: Lishi Yanjiushe 歷史研究社, 1986).

The second letter states that he is willing to look into his own mistakes in implementing the line and policy of the Party. He pledges to cleanse himself in the Cultural Revolution so as to work for the socialist cause in the future. He mentions at the end of the letter a disgraced former Director of Commerce who is deeply troubled by his only daughter who wants to draw the line of demarcation with him. He consoles himself for being childless. The third letter is about what "he" learns from a farm worker, a teacher and a Counter-Revolutionary in the cow-shed about the meaning of the Cultural Revolution. The fourth letter talks about his suffering in the cow-shed. The story ends with her determination to keep the letters for the next generation. For the sake of the children and the future, she has decided not to let the same mistakes of Lin Biao 林彪 and the Gang of Four be repeated.

The four letters of history in Zhang Xianliang's "Four letters" have displaced the purloined letter of love.² The remembrance of the wife towards the deceased husband is substituted by the husband's memoir of his own life in the Cultural Revolution. During the political movements, normal family life was replaced by long term separation between husband and wife. Even love was impossible, not to say sex. However, after the husband's rehabilitation in October 1976, love was still repressed. To serve the country, the husband spent all his time and energy working

² The "purloined letter" refers to a detective story written by Edgar Allen Poe. Jacques Lacan uses it to illustrate his theory of the primal scene and the function of language (letters). See John P. Muller and William J. Richardson, eds., *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1988).

day and night. The time they stayed together was even less than before. Finally inherent illnesses killed him. The wife keeps silent from the beginning to the end of the story. When reading the four letters, repressed tears drop like beads fallen from a broken string. They are the tears of silenced love. She can only repeat her husband's statement in writing: "Never let the same mistakes of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four be repeated!" The woman has no name and no voice. She cannot even remember her husband in more personal and intimate ways. There is a silent story of woman behind the letters of man.

The short story "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuang zhong se yu nong" <霜重色愈濃>) was first published in the March issue of *Literary Arts of Ningxia* in 1979. The story begins with an old couple Zhou Yuan 周原 and Wen Yuqi 文玉奇 embracing each other and looking back on twenty years of sufferings. Despite the advice of Wen, Zhou insists on staying firm in morality and telling the truth under whatever adverse situation. Zhou has been heavily criticized since the anti-Rightist campaign. Being named as a Rightist for his essay on Chinese history titled "On Zou Ji's satire to the King of Qi taking advice" ("Tan Zou Ji feng Qiwang najian" <談鄒忌諷齊王納諫>), he was sent to the farm for re-education-through labour (*laodong jiaoyang* 勞動教養) until October 1976. After twenty years of suffering, he is rehabilitated and has been sent back to his previous school one month before the action of the story.

The next day, Zhou meets the headmaster Kan Xingwen 關星文. Twenty-three years ago, Kan and Zhou were good friends who later turn into love rivals in

pursuit of Wen. When Zhou and Wen got married in 1957, Kan began to use the Anti-Rightist Campaign to expose the background of Zhou as having a Qing official grandfather and a Kuomintang military advisor uncle. Yet the news of Zhou being sent to the farm for re-education just for an essay published filled Kan with both regret and alarm. Later, because of his leftist leaning, Kan became a Deputy Secretary in the Party and the headmaster of a famous secondary school. During the Cultural Revolution, Kan was seriously criticized as a capitalist and became crippled after torture. In 1972, Kan was re-appointed to the school as headmaster. On the day when the two met, some materials had been sent to him criticizing Zhou for teaching *The Analects* and *Mencius* to the students and asking Kan to deal with the case. Kan refused to take his assistant Su Hanyuan's 蘇漢遠 advice to be an opportunist. Instead he pledged to support Zhou's preservation and inculcation of classical culture. Finally, Kan asked Zhou to be in charge of the Office of Language Teaching and Research. The two became close comrades again in the ongoing battle of life.

In "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour," the triangular love relationship between Zhou Yuan 周原, Wen Yuqi 文玉奇 and Kan Xingwen 關星文 intertwines with the political events of the time. In the competition for Wen's love, Kan and Zhou's friendship deteriorates. Love becomes jealousy while friendship turns to hatred. When Kan is finally defeated, he resorts to exposing the family background of Zhou in the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Later Zhou becomes a rightist and Kan a capitalist. Both of them suffer in political movements. After two decades of hatred, reconciliation comes in their pledge to pursue the same goal. The story emphasizes

the comradeship between Zhou and Kan rather than love affairs between husband and wife. The personal story of love is subservient to the grand narrative of history:

在生活中，有比個人的幸福與不幸更高的東西。(頁

72)

In life, there was something more important than
personal fortune and misfortune.³

Kan never gets married. The national cause is more important than personal affairs. Friendship is recovered in the end for the benefit of the country. But love is lost forever. The heavier the frost, the deeper the colour. The redness of the maple leaves in the beginning of the story is not the colour of love, but the colour of nationalistic sentiment, for the season of love is already gone.

The short story "In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>) was published in the January issue of *Shuofang* 《朔方》 in 1980.⁴ It was about a young girl being raped by a cadre. She left school at fifteen and was sent to a farm to till the wasteland with other teenage boys and girls. At eighteen, she fell in love with a young apprentice tractor-driver. But unfortunately, in a political

³ Zhang Xianliang, "The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuang zhong se yu nong," <霜重色愈濃>) in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 44-73), 72.

⁴ *Literary Arts of Ningxia* (*Ningxia wenyi* 《寧夏文藝》) was renamed as *Shuofang* starting with the 1st issue of 1980.

movement she was labelled as the daughter of the Five Kinds of Counter-Revolutionaries (*fandong de wulei fenzi* 反動的五類分子) for trying to rehabilitate her father's name. She was ordered to labour under the people's supervision. Her young lover rejected her immediately. After fourteen years of suffering, she heard about the full dictatorship of the Cultural Revolution (*quanmian zhuanzheng* 全面專政), and thought of a renewed review of her case. However, the Secretary and Station Director was a corrupt Party cadre who was in power because of his unscrupulous participation in the Cultural Revolution. Eventually, he raped her and the event was spread in rumours at her own expense. Such a fate was not uncommon at the time. She had nowhere to ask for justice. Spring promised rebirth and renewal of the natural world. But there was no hope in the human world for her.

In "In such a spring" the female protagonist is a passive victim of political movements. All her love affairs fail because of her rightist label. Fifteen years are lost. Life seemed fragmentary. Her first love with an apprentice tractor-driver ended when she was suddenly declared the daughter of the Five Kinds of Counter-Revolutionaries for trying to rehabilitate her father's name. The next day, the young man asked someone to return her a small bag, meaning that love had come to an end. Inside was a pen, a cotton sweater and a pair of socks made by her. The night when she sent him the pen was the happiest moment in her life. For her:

跋涉了一天的疲勞算甚麼，甚至終生的疲勞又算甚麼，
 麼，一個女人加上一個男人就能創造出一個世界。

(頁102)

Being exhausted from a whole day's walk was nothing.

Even lifelong exhaustion was nothing. A woman plus a man could create a world.⁵

After being labelled, a woman's normal progress of life was interrupted. She could have no place in the world of love or marriage. Fourteen years later, she began to take care of the two-year old son of a technician. As a widower, he had hinted to her that once her label was removed, he would marry her. Unfortunately, after she was raped by the Station Director, she was promptly abandoned. A love story changes its tune in face of reality. Spring may arouse the yearning for love in a young girl, but it could incite no more feelings in her.

"The Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>) was first published in the February issue of *Shuofang* 《朔方》 in 1980. "Xing" begins with a Preface by "I" talking about the picture of a dog he saw in an exhibition. Then "I" narrated the story between an old man and a dog in a time when friendship and compassion could no longer be found among human beings. The dog had no name and no special features. Yet it never left the sixty-year-old man Xing. Twenty years ago, Xing had a wife who died after eight months of marriage. When he had saved enough money for re-marriage, it was the time of the

⁵ Zhang Xianliang, "In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>) in

Great Leap Forward and Xing was sent to the mountains to melt steel. In 1972, a famine scattered thousands of hungry farmers.

One day, a thirty-year-old woman from Northern Shaanxi 陕北 was begging for food. With the match-making of old man Wei, the two finally get together as a couple. On one occasion, Xing goes to the city and finds a mongrel which follows him around. In the end, he adopts it. But when he gets home, the woman has gone. The dog then became a substitute for the woman to accompany Xing's remaining lonely years. Unfortunately, in one extreme event of the political movement, all dogs of the village including Xing's were to be killed. With the death of the dog, Old man Xing withered away and eventually died. In a time when even dogs were sacrificed for class struggle, human existence could no longer be meaningful.

In "The Story of old man Xing and his dog," the dog is a substitute for the woman. Both of them wander away from home and are "adopted" by old man Xing. On their wedding day, the woman is described as "a dog without a family" (*sangjia gou* 丧家狗). The dog has an expression in its eyes which reminds old man Xing of his woman's gaze. The eyes of the dog have more black than white. Its eyesight is both gentle and faithful, as faithful and gentle as the woman's. The gaze of/ for the Other defines the man. It endows him with meaning. For a farmer, love has to be experienced in a social context. It can only be felt in mutual care and concern during adverse situations. Old man Xing can never understand love in the romantic sense:

我們中國人有我們中國人的愛情方式，中國勞動者的愛情是在艱難困苦中結晶出來的。他們在崎嶇坎坷的人生道路上互相摻扶，互相鼓勵，互相遮風擋雨，一起承受壓在他們身上的物質負擔和精神負擔；他們之間不用華而不實的詞藻，不用羅曼諦克的表示，在不息的勞作中和傷病飢寒時的相互關懷中，就默默地傳導了愛的搏動。（頁123）

We Chinese have our Chinese mode of love. The love of the Chinese working people is crystalized in difficulties and hardship. They help each other, encouraged each other and protect each other in the rugged path of life. They bore their material and spiritual burdens together. There were no flamboyant words or romantic expressions. In the endless hard work, in the mutual care during sickness and cold, they quietly transmit the pulse of love.⁶

His ten months' cohabitation with the woman leaves in the psyche of Old man Xing the traces of an insatiable desire. It is an experience which gives him meaning in life.

⁶ Zhang Xianliang, "The Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>) in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 115-137), 123.

When the woman is gone, the dog is there to fill the lack. It is a substitute for him to transfer all the residual feelings of his love. After it is killed, life becomes empty of meaning and he is sick of life.

Descendants of the River (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》) was first published in Vol. 1 of *The Contemporary* (*Dangdai* 《當代》) in February 1983. The story begins with Wei Tiangui 魏天貴, the Sub-branch Secretary of the Brigade (大隊黨支部書記) of Weijiaqiao (weijia qiao 魏家橋), reflecting upon the twenty years of changes in the village. Back in 1959, the Deputy Secretary of the County You Xiaozhou 尤小舟 was put under Wei's supervision as an opportunist Rightist. From him, Wei first learned the spirit of the Yellow River on which Weijiaqiao was situated. In the Great Leap Forward of 1958, Wei was clever enough to follow his agrarian instinct and paid lip service to the Party policies only. He managed to keep a secret farm (*heitian* 黑田) for peas and helped his village avoid the "natural" disasters of famine from 1960-62.

In 1966, the Red Guard from Beijing came to the village and declared a Revolutionary Rebel Union under Wu Shangrong 吳尚榮. The Deputy Secretary of the Prefectural Party Committee (地委副書記) He Lide 賀立德 was dragged to the open denunciation meeting for criticism. In a public toilet, Wei taught him his compromising philosophy of obedience and asked him to confess even in lies to the rebels. Later the Union split into the Red Revolutionary Rebels organized by the Party cadres and Red five kinds (*hongwulei* 紅五類) under the former Provincial

Secretary Wang Yihu 王一虎. When He gets in control of the situation again, he sent more than twenty deposed Party Secretaries to Weijiaqiao under the care of Wei.

In the mid -1970s, many Party cadres were restored to power. In the new age of reform, the collective system of the socialist commune was replaced by a household responsibility system (*baogan daohu* 包幹到戶). Twenty years of Communist land reform and Revolutionary class struggle came to nothing fruitful or meaningful. He Lide was pessimistic about the recent decollectivization policy while the County Secretary You Xiaozhou fully embraced the changes. Despite the vicissitudes of human fortune and the changes of political events, the Yellow River flowed on. The River underwent a natural process of sedimentation to filter away the turbid water and the dirty soil. So was the Chinese spirit being purified after the purge of the Cultural Revolution.

In *Descendants of the River*, even lengthy passages of eulogy about the greatness of the Chinese spirit still cannot hide the latent yearning for a forbidden love. The love story between Wei Tiangui and Han Yumei 韓玉梅 is interrupted by the narrations of more important political events and cultural reflections. But the story of love is still there despite the interference of history. Wei is the Sub-branch Secretary in charge of the entire village. He is successful in leading his countrymen to live through the most difficult periods of political turmoils and natural disaster. However, his family life lacks love and caring. His mother has been dead since the communist liberation. He then has to find a wife according to the habitual rule of custom, but not the inner yearning of love. He asks a go-between to find a girl of suitable age and background and gets married to her. But the wife is a lazy woman. She eats and

sleeps all day. Though she gives birth to two boys and one girl and stays with Wei for 30 years before she dies, husband and wife still look like strangers. The woman could only satisfy the physical needs of the man. But there is still desire waiting to be satisfied.

Han Yumei, on the other hand, is portrayed as a beauty (phoenix 鳳凰) of the uncultivated village. After the death of her father, Wei sent her to the city to work at the cotton factory. She was sent back the next year for having affairs with several men. She became pregnant and gives birth to a girl. Wei tried to give her help since then and personal feelings develop between the two. After ten years of single life, Han gets married to a man called Song Tiangui, apparently a substitute for Wei Tiangui. The forbidden love is displaced by legal marriage and sex becomes part of daily life:

庄户人，成了家就是過日子，生兒育女唄，只要沒
有三災兩病，就不算有甚麼波瀾。（頁106）

For farmers, getting married was just part of getting by,
giving birth to children and all that. As long as there
were no natural disasters and physical sickness, there
would be no big troubles.⁷

⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River* (*He de zisun* 《河的子孫》), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* 《張賢亮選集(三)》 (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 3- 159), 106.

For Wei, there is no sweet romance or heartfelt tenderness, marriage is just part of life. Sex can be reduced to a physical need like warmth and food. However, the displacement of forbidden love into family life and the substitution of Wei by Song still could not satisfy the hidden desire. Finally Han gives birth to a dead girl and divorces Song.

One night in her house, Han throws herself onto Wei. Immediately, we have the following description:

他活了三十多歲還從來沒有享受過女人的愛情，而這愛情表現得如此突然、粗獷、奔放、熱烈，如同火山爆發一般，燃燒的熔岩夾帶著大量熾熱的泥石流，能把一切草木頑石都熔化；又像黃河決了堤：泥漿迸濺，洪水橫溢，咆哮翻滾，勢不可擋。（頁54）

He had lived through thirty years but still hadn't once enjoyed a woman's love. And for this love to express itself in such a sudden, rough, unrestrained, passionate manner like the eruption of a volcano. The burning lava carried a huge amount of boiling mud and stone which could melt all grasses, woods and tough boulders. It resembled the Yellow River bursting its dykes, mud

gushing all over, water rampaging in flood, totally
irresistible.⁸

The Yellow River is the mythical origin of ancient China where the ancestors built our race. It is at once nature and culture. As a symbol of culture, the Yellow River has its historical mission. Yet as a symbol of sex, it has huge potential to overreach the boundaries of morality. Wei never understands love in a woman's sense. A man's love refers to his family responsibility. A woman's love, on the other hand, seems to mean the desire for sex. There is a struggle between the (male) soul and the (female) body. The cultural meaning of the River displaces its natural function. A man's social responsibility for the nation and the people represses his physical desire for sex.

Due to guilt and shame, Wei and Han's sexual relationship was never successful. Wei was described by the narrator as a castrated horse (*shanle de ma* 驢了的馬), and by Han as a castrated donkey (*shan lü* 驢驢). Physical frustrations in the body are finally compensated by the psychological satisfaction in the soul. The residual memory of the woman bequeaths Wei with meaning and fruitfulness in life:

他只覺得對韓玉梅有一種深深的、揪心扯肺的思念。即使這個女人也許在世界上消失了，但她的肉體就像糖溶化在水裏一樣已經溶化在他的血液中，在他回首往事的時候，使他的舌尖都能感到一絲一

⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River* 54.

絲的甜蜜，覺得自己一生還是充實而有意思的。(頁68)

He only felt a deep, heart-rending memory of Han Yumei. Even if this woman might disappear in the world, her body had already melted into his blood like sugar into the water. When he recalled past events, even the tip of his tongue could taste bits of sweetness, feeling that his life was still substantial and meaningful.

9

Now the inner struggle between the body and the mind is transformed into an imaginary feeling of completeness between the self and the (absent) Other. Meaning is achieved psychologically through the language of remembrance rather than physically through the union of sex.

After Han's divorce, Wei has the opportunity to stay alone with Han again. However, the expected outcome of sexual gratification is promptly displaced by a scene of psychological confession. The desire for sex is substituted by the language of love:

他的話像黃河決了堤，語言的洪流不論流到哪裏都
漫無阻擋。啊，還有甚麼比這更幸福的呢？大自然

⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River* 68.

大概正是爲了這個才把人分爲男人和女人的吧！你可以把自己成熟的或幼稚的、嚴肅的或荒誕的、深奧的或淺薄的、崇高的或可鄙的、聖潔的或猥褻的、公義的或自私的..... 把肺腑裏所有的東西都抖落出來，即使你只不過在對著她自言自語，她那一對忠貞的、無私的、愛戀的目光就給了你一道光亮，使你能把自己料理出個頭緒。（頁118, 119）

His words were like the Yellow River breaking its dykes. Wherever it was, the flood of language could never be stopped. Oh! Was there anything more fortunate than that? Maybe it was precisely for this, nature divided human beings into man and woman! You could pour out things of yours: mature or childish, serious or ridiculous, profound or superficial, sublime or despicable, holy or base, just or selfish. . . . everything in your soul. Even if you were only talking to yourself in front of her, her faithful, selfless, loving gaze would give you a beam of light, for you to figure out a pattern from the mess.¹⁰

¹⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River* 118, 119.

Through language, sexual desires are sublimated into a religious moment of spiritual release. The Yellow River finally overflows -- not as sex beyond the bounds of morality but as emotions beyond the restriction of the mind. National rejuvenation becomes personal redemption and the cultural River of China becomes a historical river of the self.

Though Han may not understand him at all, it is her primordial gaze of femaleness which assures him the possibility of redemption. In the spiritual moment, she has become a sacred image of the archetypal woman people turn to in times of distress and hopelessness. The gaze of the (m)Other defines the man. It is a gaze which purifies his present evil and cleanses his past sin. It gives him power and strength to escape from the shadow of the past. After the confession, he becomes the subject of history rather than the victim of events. He can then be a complete man, no longer half a ghost. He reaches the journey of spiritual rebirth:

他有了一個知心人，他能把所有的心思告訴她；他的話說完了，他的靈魂也得救了，他的兩重性格在她的懷裏重新統一起來。他堅定地相信了自己不是「半個鬼」，而是一個人！（頁119）

He had a soulmate. He could tell all his thoughts to her; his words came to an end. And his soul was saved. His schizophrenia began to be re-unified in her embrace.

He firmly believed that he was no longer "half a ghost,"
but a complete man! ¹¹

With the symbolic baptism of love, the self can be unified and complete. The encounter with the primordial (m)Other has exiated the ghost of the past. The journey of remembrance then comes to an end. It is time for Zhang's fictional journey to start anew.

Section B: The Journey of love: women and self in an imaginary setting

Among Zhang Xianliang's earlier love stories are "Sunset" ("Xiyang" <夕陽>), "Gypsy" ("Jipusai ren" <吉卜賽人>), "Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>) and "First kiss" ("Chuwen" <初吻>). When narrating these stories, Zhang is half a man, half a woman. In a disguised voice, he speaks for his repressed self in reality and also for women who only exist in his imagination. The intensity of emotions involved in the descriptions of the love stories are displaced energies of the deepest stratum of Zhang's unconscious psyche. Reaching this stage of the fictional journey, Zhang Xianliang moves closer and closer towards the repressed part of himself. The journey of love should be read as an initial stage in Zhang's journey of feelings. At this stage, Zhang Xianliang begins to turn away from the grand narrative of nation and reform and focuses on the personal matter of love and feelings.

¹¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Descendants of the River* 119.

In the Author's note to his *Journey of feelings*, Zhang Xianliang quotes from Heine and claims that:

海涅說：「世界破碎了，並在詩人身上留下裂痕。」《感情的歷程》是《唯物論者的啓示錄》的第一部，記錄的是世界破碎了時在一位詩人心中留下的裂痕。(引自〈作者題識〉)

Heine says: "The world is shattered and leaves on the body of the poet a scar." *Journey of feelings* is the first book of *The Revelation of a Materialist*. It records the scar in a poet's heart when the world is shattered.¹²

Zhang Xianliang started his literary career as a poet. His poem "Song of the strong wind" (Dafeng ge 〈大風歌〉) was handpicked by the *Yan River Literature and Arts* and *The People's Daily* as a big poisonous weed. In the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the poem became the evidence for his anti-party, anti-socialism and anti-people guilt. At the age of twenty-one, Zhang was classified as a rightist.

Over the following twenty-two years, Zhang underwent different kinds of labour reforms and thought rectifications in Northwest China. The experiences are too painful to recall, yet too feared to be forgotten. His self image is already shattered

¹² Zhang Xianliang, "Author's Note" ("Zuozhe tizhi" 〈作者題識〉), in *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感情的歷程》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1987).

into pieces during years of dehumanizing tortures. After his rehabilitation, the poet then becomes a story teller, with the true self of poetry substituted by various fictionalized characters in imaginary scenes of love. All love stories of Zhang are Scar literature in the disguise of love. The language of love is only a displacement for the psychological trauma of the former poet after the rupture of the world. Through the imaginary experience of love, the writer can then re-establish his lost relationship with the broken world.

1. Desire of/ for the Other: Love Stories and Self-formation

For Sigmund Freud, literature is the sublimation of hidden wishes repressed in real life. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* of 1901, he pioneers the understanding of dreams as wish fulfilments. Sexual wishes repressed in the day time are released at night in the imaginary world of dreams. To escape from internalized censorship, forbidden wishes are disguised and distorted by the dream work of condensation and displacement. Therefore, the interpretation of dreams involves the uncovering of repressed wishes, or latent dream thoughts, from the manifest content. The two are not in a one-to-one equivalence, but one overdetermining the other, meaning that each latent dream thought is represented by several images in the manifest content and each image manifested in the dream represents several latent dream thoughts. Sometimes conscious activities may interfere with the recollection of

dreams during free associations. These are secondary revisions of the primary wishes.

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Then, in *The Ego and The Id*, Freud formulates the notion of self in terms of the conscious ego and the unconscious id. The conscious self is constantly under the pressure of internalized moral restrictions known as the superego, a disorganized cauldron of sexual wishes urging immediate satisfaction known as the id, and the external reality. The id follows the pleasure principle, always ready to have its energy of sex -- the libido -- released. The superego follows the moral principle, repressing the pleasure-seeking id with senses of guilt and shame. The ego follows the reality principle, trying to keep a rational balance between the id and the superego. Wishes repressed internally by the superego and externally by reality will emerge in disguised forms at night in dreams to avoid censorship. Literary men could sublimate their dreams in writings while neurotics and psychotics have irrational behaviour and hallucinatory illusions dominated by their dream thoughts.¹⁴

Freud's fulfilment of sexual wish (*Wunsch*), however, is later re-formulated by Lacan as need, demand (*demande*) and desire (*désir*). Need refers to the physical, somatic needs. It includes Freud's sex but also food and warmth as well as other bodily necessities. Psychological demand minus physical need equals desire. Desire

¹³ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, James Strachey, trans. and ed., (London: Penguin, 1976).

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, Anna Freud, comp., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1986), 439- 483.

is what cannot be satisfied. It is the feeling of the lack of something, the feeling that something else is still missing after the physical satisfaction of each demand. It is the residual effects of joy (*dérives de la jouissance*) originating in the first separation of an infant from its mother, the first awareness that the mother is not part of itself. This primordial trauma of psychological incompleteness becomes the primal scene staging an unconscious structure in its psyche, to be repeated again and again in the future life journey of the infant. Whenever it feels the Lack, it will unconsciously refer back to the primal scene and re-experience the same story from union to separation. All future desires are only repetitions of this first Desire of/ for the (m)Other (*Désir de l'Autre*). Every moment of satisfaction is only a temporary substitution for the primordial Lack.¹⁵

Viewed from the foregoing summary, we may understand Zhang's love stories in a new light. In a sense, all of them are displaced wish fulfilments of the author's physical weaknesses and psychological frustrations in reality. Most stories re-stage the same unconscious structure from union to separation. The change in language and plot only renews a similar structure in different forms. It re-surfaces as the primal scene the writer repeatedly returns to for temporary satisfaction. In this

¹⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., Alan Sheridan, trans., (London: Penguin, 1977); John P. Muller, eds., *The Purloined Poe: Lacan, Derrida, and Psychoanalytic Reading* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1988). Also important secondary sources like Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1986) and Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, David Macey, trans., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).

journey of love, an ideal image of different women is in focus. Yet all women are but one woman in the same archetypal Mother image under different names. The gaze of woman defines the man, for it resembles the gaze of/ for the primordial (m)Other. Through the fictional encounter with the female Other, Zhang Xianliang can finally face his real self in reality. The imaginary experience of love stitches up a re-totalized ego recovering from the trauma of the past. The fallen world of humanity can then be redeemed by the fictional confession of sin and the symbolic baptism of love.

The language of love, on the other hand, also hides the private wish of Zhang Xianliang to locate himself in a meaningful community of family and society. Loneliness and alienation have struck the aging writer with anxiety and agitation. He resorts to an ideology inherent in the language of love. One may interpret the love stories of Zhang with reference to Louis Althusser's family and social ideological state apparatuses. The familial and social ISAs function unconsciously, being already installed and inscribed in institutionalized social practices from love pursuit to marriage.

In the language of love, the solitary individual is hailed and interpellated as a subject in the new community.¹⁶ Two lonely hearts can become one unified soul through the ordeal of love and the ritual of marriage. A man can then locate himself with a sense of belonging and security in the new relationship. Out of love, he may

¹⁶ Refer to Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Ben Brewster, trans., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, 127-186).

have to be aimless and restless in the continuous journey of life. Love stories constitute the system of representation by which Zhang Xianliang presents his real conditions of existence to himself in an imaginary form. Through the fictional language, irreconcilable conflicts of life can be temporarily resolved in the self-deceiving logic of love.

2. Love Stories against the Lonely Journey of life

"Gypsy" ("Jipusai ren" <吉普赛人>) was first published in the May issue of *Literary Arts of Ningxia* in 1979. It is the earliest love story of Zhang Xianliang written immediately after his rehabilitation. Many of Zhang's later love stories follow an identical pattern from union to separation. The story begins with the Spring Festival in Shanghai in 1979. The narrator is a University student from the working class. When he heard of the loudspeaker broadcasting the end of discriminatory policies for descendants of the landlord and the rich peasant, he began to tell a story of the past. Back to the time when Zhou Enlai died in 1976, the narrator was one of eight workers plus an additional truck driver who represented their factory in Ningxia to send a condolence wreath to Tiananmen Square.

On the night of the Qing Ming Festival, riots occurred at Tiananmen Square among the mourners. The narrator was arrested and sent back to Ningxia by train. He escaped his guards from the confinement by chance and sneaked into the compartment of a goods train. Then he saw a girl of his own age hiding in the same place. The girl claimed to be a gypsy named Carmen. Her father was a landlord. Her sister and aunt were labelled as rightists and she was declared a Counter-

Revolutionary at the age of fifteen during the Cultural Revolution. In 1970, she tried to ask for a re-consideration of her case. The Brigade regarded this as an act of class revenge and tried to imprison her. She then went to Beijing for help and ended up as a vagrant and a petty thief.

In the brief encounter, the two became lovers and talked of living together in future. When they were discovered hiding in the compartment, she leaves in order to save the protagonist. The two never met afterwards. He did not even know her real name. The new policy announced through the speakers has marked a new age for so-called class enemies. From now on there will be no more Chinese who ramble in the mainland like gypsies as victims of class struggles.

"Sunset" ("Xiyang" <夕陽>) was first published in the September issue of *People's Literature* (*Renmin wenxue* 《人民文學》) in 1981. The protagonist Sang Gong 桑弓 was a writer rehabilitated from the reform camps. He was now a famous and important literary figure of whom people made frequent requests. One day, a woman came to meet him. Then he began to remember the time when he was still in the reform brigade. Some years ago he was left behind to set up a field ridge (*tiangeng* 田埂) all alone. Suddenly, a girl who looked like an intellectual from the city helped him do the work. Together they built a ridge of about 50 metres. This experience of working with the opposite sex struck the string of love in his heart. Every eye contact during the work gave him a touch of Heavenly pleasure.

After all these years, she had married and divorced. She deliberately chose a place which had no connection with the past. However, in the eyes of Sang Gong,

her attractiveness just came from that particular association with the past. Despite the passage of time and the loss of youthfulness, she had the beauty of the forlorn world of ideals and imaginations. Finally the two became lovers. Even though it was already the latter part of the human stage, who would say that sunset was not as beautiful as sunrise?

"Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>) was first published in the February issue of *Wenhui Monthly* (*Wenhui yuekan* 《文匯月刊》) in 1983. The story was narrated by a driver to the writer who hitch-hiked on his truck. In 1960, the narrator was forced to leave his hometown to make a living. He went to Xinjiang and became an apprentice to a truck-driver. Then he got married to a girl who came to the place to escape famine in Shaanbei. But the wife was apathetic and indifferent to him. Later a young man came to find his wife and was discovered to be an earlier lover of hers. Finally the narrator divorced her.

On one occasion, the driver saw on the road a young woman with a three or five - year- old baby. She was an intellectual from Shanghai dispatched to the countryside to learn from the working people. She hitch-hiked on the truck and asked to go to Bitter Spring. Her baby had caught pneumonia and needed immediate hospitalizing. The narrator drove all night and took him to the doctor. When the boy recovered, the truck-driver drove mother and son to Bitter Spring. In the end he marries her. The narrator learns something from his two marriages. Whether life is tough or not does not depend on the place. It depends on who you are staying with.

"First kiss" ("Chuwen" <初吻>) was first published in Vol. 1 of *Chinese Writers* (*Zhongguo zuojia* 《中國作家》) in 1985. It was anthologized with *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman* in one volume as Zhang Xianliang's *Journey of feelings* by The Writers' Publishing Co. (*Zuojia chubanshe* 作家出版社) in the same year. The story begins with a teenage boy (young master Zhang 章少爺) newly admitted to a high school in Nanjing. On his way to school are some garden flats in the Western style. One day a girl of his age called from the flats and asked him to climb up to the window. The young boy and the young girl had some casual chats before he left for school. They met in the same way for several mornings. She was discovered to be a cripple.

The encounter finally developed into the young boy's first love. He had his first kiss with her. It initiated him into the feeling of oneself as an individual and as an independent man (*yi ge ren* 一個人). In the end, the entire family of the girl moved to Taiwan. When the mainland was liberated by the Communists, the two were separated for ever. They would meet again one day when the adults were not fighting the war of separation any more.

In the summaries of the foregoing stories, one can begin to understand the meaning of love for Zhang Xianliang. Love as a satisfaction of physical needs is repressed under the psychological wish for self enhancement. The language of love gives an organizing principle to the undeveloped self. It embraces an ideology which hails an individual as a subject of familial and social life. The familial and social ISA give a person his place in a community and his orientation in life. He can then settle

down with a material sense of confidence and meaning. Otherwise he will feel forever restless and agitated in the ongoing journey of time. All the love stories discussed have mentioned the fear and insecurity in being alone and alienated. It is a time when the ideological entry into a new world brought by a new relationship is most intensely yearned for.

In "Gypsy," the protagonist says:

莎士比亞說，弱者，你的名字是女人。這話並不對。照我看，一個離開了集體，失去了隊伍的人才才是真正的弱者。我在天安門廣場上和幾十萬人一起高喊「還我花園，還我戰友」的口號時，覺得自己有翻天覆地的力量，但當作爲一個逃犯躲在這堆枕木中間的時候，卻深深地感到孤獨與恐懼。．．．．．我不是英雄，只有在集體中才有英雄氣概。（頁81）

Shakespeare has said, "Frailty, thy name is woman." These words are not right. For me, a person leaving his community, losing his group is the real weak person. When I was together with tens of thousands of people in Tiananmen Square shouting out the slogans "Return my wreath, return my comrade," I felt that I had the power to overthrow Heaven and Earth. But when I become an escapee hiding in this heap of sleepers, I feel intensely

the sense of loneliness and fear. . . . I am not a hero,
only amid the crowd can I have the heroic spirit.¹⁷

Alienation erodes the strength and confidence of the lonely man. Yet it also prepares him psychologically for a new relationship. It depends on where the next stop of the train of destiny leads him.

Sometimes loneliness may even unsettle the sense of achievement and successfulness in life. As for the famous writer Sang Gong,

他已經不年輕了，但在他不工作的時候，他是不願意一個人呆在房裏的。這倒不是他生性喜歡熱鬧，而是只要他獨自一人，思想又沒有進入創作過程的時候，心緒就會莫名其妙地煩躁不安。 總會產生出一陣憂郁的孤獨感。（頁91）

He is no longer young. But when he is not working, he is unwilling to stay at home alone. It is not because his personality inclines to boisterous atmosphere. It is because when he is alone but before his thoughts enter the creative process, his temperament will be

¹⁷ Zhang Xianliang, "Gypsy" ("Jipusai ren" <吉普賽人>) in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 74-99), 81.

unreasonably agitated. . . . , always giving rise to a dull
sense of loneliness.¹⁸

Loneliness comes back like a ghost haunting the inner consciousness of the aging man in whatever solitary moments. Other forms of social gatherings can only temporarily displace the sense of anxiety and agitation. What he desires is a familial and social relationship, a relationship only made possible by the company of woman.

The truck driver in "Bitter springs" has to figure out a way to drive away loneliness:

帶個人在我身邊，他不孤單了，我也不孤單了。(頁
106)

If I have someone riding beside me, he won't be lonely.
I won't be lonely.¹⁹

Someone is needed in his daily trip through the desert of Xinjiang. Similarly, a relationship is wanted in the ongoing journey of life. That is the only way you get settled down in a community and have a sense of belonging to the place. Even the small boy in "First kiss" feels lonely in school:

¹⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "Sunset" ("Xiyang" <夕陽>) in Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 90-104), 91.

¹⁹ Zhang Xianliang, "Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>) in Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 3-89), 106.

這所學校的同學好象都有點排外，沒有一個主動和我打招呼的。我感到陌生和孤獨。(頁3)

The classmates of this school all seemed to be somewhat exclusionist. Nobody actively greeted me. I felt out of place and lonely.²⁰

The young boy is alienated in his new environment. He feels uneasy in the stage of puberty as well. The dislocation in time and space incites an awareness of the Lack in him. The appearance of the young girl and the accompanying relationship is therefore necessary to alleviate the awkward feeling of being an outsider.

3. Gaze of/ for the Other: Woman in love stories

In the love stories, there is no vigorous struggle between the body and the mind for the release of sexual energy. Instead there exists a passionate yearning for the brief encounter between the self and the female Other. Woman is not simply craved as a tangible figure of man's physical desire, but also exists as an intangible form of desiring gaze in the residual memory of man. The way she is remembered to look at the man channels him towards a new orientation of life. Existence will be meaningless and fragmentary without such an imaginary moment of seeing oneself being seen.

²⁰ Zhang Xianliang, "First kiss" ("Chuwen" <初吻>) in *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感情的歷程》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1987, 1-23), 3.

In "Gypsy," Carmen's gaze reassures the confidence of the young man in himself and China:

後來，逐漸被我的熱情所感染，她用信任的目光望著我。這種目光使我感到一種甜蜜的自豪，並使我對自己的構想充滿信心。我可以說，直到那時，我才對社會主義，對四個現代化有了一個比較全面的理解，因為在那裏面，加進去了我們過去從未想過的人與人之間的新型的社會關係。（頁94）

Later, being gradually touched by my enthusiasm, she bestowed a gaze of confidence on me. This look made me feel a kind of sweet self-pride. It lent me confidence in my ideas. I might say that it was only then that I started to have a more comprehensive understanding of socialism and the Four Modernizations Program, for we had added inside something we never thought of before: a new mode of social relations among mankind.²¹

The new mode of social relations hints at various possibilities between man and woman.

²¹ Zhang Xianliang, "Gypsy" 94.

In "Sunset," the woman's gaze seems to be burning with desire. Even when the tangible features of the woman become indistinct, her intangible glances still leave their imprint in the memory of Sang Gong:

突地，他接觸到了她的眼睛。那是甚麼樣的眼睛，
那不是夕陽，而是兩朵黑色的火焰，在草帽的帽檐
下熠熠閃光，甚至像是會把草帽點燃一般。十幾年
來，那麼多痛苦、屈辱、迷惘、惶惑統統淡漠了。
她面孔的其它部分也模糊了，成了若隱若現的影
子，只有那一對燃燒著的火焰的眼睛，他終生不能
忘卻。.....（頁96）

剎那間，時光彷彿倒轉，在蒼茫的暮色中，他又看
到了那對閃爍著熱情的眼睛，那對飽含著期待、探
詢、企求的眼睛。（頁103）

Suddenly, he met her eyes. What kind of eyes? They
were not the sunset. They were two black flames
shining under the brim of the straw hat, even seeming as
if they would set fire to the straw hat. After more than
ten years, so much pain, humiliation, puzzlement, fear
and doubt all faded away. Her face and other features
were no longer distinct, like shadows sometimes hidden

and sometimes emerging. Never could he forget her
burning flames of eyes²²

All of a sudden, time seemed to reverse. In the obscure
dusk, he saw once again glimmers of that pair of
passionate eyes, eyes full of expectations, enquiries and
requests.²³

In "Bitter springs," the gaze of the Shanghai woman changes from doubt to certainty.

This also reflects the relationship between the man and the woman:

但是，她的眼光象刺眼的閃光燈在我臉上閃了一
下，使我的眼蒙子老印著她那副表情。那是一種甚
麼眼光呢？（頁133, 134）

我別過頭看了看她的眼睛。她的眼神很深沈。不像
那晚上淚水漣漣的。我相信她能做到她說的話，在
她眼裏的確是再沒有困難的事了。（頁144）

²² Zhang Xianliang, "Sunset" 96.

²³ Zhang Xianliang, "Sunset" 103.

But her gaze seemed to be a dazzling flashbulb going off in my face, leaving that expression of her imprinted forever on my eye lids. What sort of gaze was it? ²⁴

I turned my head to steal a look at her eyes. Her gaze was very profound, unlike the tearful ones of that night.

I believed she could do what she said. In her eyes there were in fact no more difficult problems. ²⁵

In "First kiss," the desiring gaze of the crippled girl leads the young boy from the fantasies of childhood to a more sophisticated stage of adulthood:

我抬起頭詫異地看著她。這一霎間她似乎變大了，
變成熟了。她用一種憂郁的、彷彿深諳世事的眼光
看著我，等待我說甚麼話。（頁22）

I raised my head and looked at her with surprise. She seemed to grow big, grow mature in such a brief moment. She took a kind of melancholic, seemingly sophisticated gaze to look at me and wait me to saying something. ²⁶

²⁴ Zhang Xianliang, "Bitter springs" 133, 134.

²⁵ Zhang Xianliang, "Bitter springs" 144.

²⁶ Zhang Xianliang, "First kiss" 22.

The imaginary encounter with the desiring gaze of/ for the Other finally initiates a definitive moment for the subject formation of man. After the momentary experience, the self can no longer be the same as before. In "Gypsy," the willingness of Carmen to get married to the narrator makes him a man. Through the relationship they mutually define each other. In "Sunset," the woman is a connection between the past and the present. She can arouse in Sang Gong the forlorn world of ideals and fantasies. In "Bitter springs," the Shanghai woman gives the truck driver a sense of purpose and belonging. The alien, isolated, deserted place becomes his home. In "First kiss," the meeting with the crippled girl transforms the young boy into a different person:

並且，我開始感到我與媽媽，與我所有的親人、與我的同學和老師隔離開了，從今以後我在他們面前已經開始成爲一個人，一個個人；我的幼稚和天真都將從繭中蛻變而出，成爲獨立的意志力。（頁20）

Moreover, I began to feel my mother, all my relatives and my classmates and teachers were separated from me. Henceforth, in front of them I started to become a man, an individual; my childishness and innocence would

transmute out of the cocoon and become an independent will.²⁷

After the brief encounter with the female Other, the man grows up into a subject with independent will power. This primal scene of initiation will become part of the man reminding him of the meaning and purpose of existence for the rest of his life.

Love stories are the fulfilments of Zhang Xianliang's wishes. This psychological condition of the male protagonist in the love stories echoes Zhang Xianliang's personal situation. He mentions in his essay "A Paper full of nonsense" ("Man zhi huangtang yan" <滿紙荒唐言>) that even though other people gave him much sympathy and concern, deep inside his heart was an inner core of loneliness (*gudugan de neihe* 孤獨感的內核). He was already a middle aged man but still unmarried. All the women in his works are in fact imaginary figures of his dreams. They were the wish fulfilments of Zhang's lonely soul. In his words:

是的，因為那都是我，也只能是屬於我的夢中的洛神。《吉普賽人》中的「卡門」，《在這樣的春天裏》的「她」，《那老漢和狗的故事》中的女乞丐，《靈與肉》中的秀芝，《土牢情話》中的女看守，這些藝術形象雖然在現實生活中並沒有具體的模特兒，但她們的心靈，的確凝聚了我觀察過的百

²⁷ Zhang Xianliang, "First kiss" 20.

十位老老少少勞動婦女身上散射出來的聖潔光輝。

(頁190)

Yes, because they are the Goddess of the River Luo of my dreams who could only be of my dreams. "Carmen" in "Gypsy," "she" in "In such a spring," the female beggar in "Story of old man Xing and his dog," Xiuzhi in "Soul and body," the female guard in *Love in a dungeon*. Even though these artistic images have no concrete models in real life, their heart really condenses the pure spiritual halo of tens and hundreds of working women of all ages.²⁸

The female images are in fact constructed in a mentality similar to the dream-work of condensation. All women are but one archetypal woman. They give Zhang the temporary satisfaction of unity and completeness against the lonely journey of life.

The love stories of Zhang mark a significant stage in the understanding of his wishes for personal, familial and social identities. However, such a language of sublimation has repressed yet another layer of text. As Zhang's journey moves on, the language of love gradually gives way to the language of sex. In the later stories of Zhang, it will surface as the major focus of Zhang Xianliang's journey of feelings.

²⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "A Paper full of nonsense" ("Manzhi huangtangyan" <滿紙荒唐言>)

in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 187-194), 190.

Chapter V Between Love and Sex: The Narration of Self in the Chinese Gulag

. 我經常端詳僅有幾個月的我，奇怪這
個傻乎乎的嬰兒怎麼會變成這樣神情陰郁喜怒無
常，連我自己都討厭的中年人。對這張照片看著看
著，我會游離出我之外，似乎我既不是這個嬰兒，
也不是現在的我，而是另一個甚麼人。是一個甚麼
人呢？（頁594）

I often brood over the several-months-old me,
wondering how come such a foolish infant would grow
up into a sombre, irritable middle aged man hated even
by myself. Looking and looking at this picture, I will
leave my body as if I were neither this infant, nor the
present me, but another person. What kind of person? ¹

In this stage of the fictional journey, we witness Zhang Xianliang's formation of self both in fiction and in reality. In the disguised languages of love and sex, through the mouths of the semi-autobiographical protagonists, Zhang re-tells the most painful experience of himself in the labour reform camps. The love stories in

¹ Zhang Xianliang, "Words written for this book" ("Wei zhe ben shu xie de hua" <為這本書寫的話>) in *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang* (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi, 1986, 594-595), 594.

the Chinese Gulag repeat the same psychological structure from crisis to recovery. The confessions of sin and the redemption of love bring to the fore the primordial desire of Zhang Xianliang for the rebirth of selfhood under the female Other's gaze.

On the other hand, the explicit sexual descriptions in *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) and *Good morning! Friends* (*Zao'an pengyou* 《早安！朋友》) establish Zhang Xianliang both locally and internationally as a rebellious writer. The categorical labelling of Zhang Xianliang as a representative writer of sex literature and the discursive manipulation on the expression of sex may reveal the social and political reality of mainland China in the 1980s. For half a decade, Zhang had been writing in the voice of the Party. The language of sex finally betrays a ventriloquist voice of his repressed psyche. The fictional split in the end brings forth the establishment of self in reality.

Section A. Narration as semi-autobiography

"Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>) was first published in the September issue of *Shuofang* in 1980. The story begins with Xu Lingjun 許靈均 meeting his Harvard graduate father after thirty years of separation. Thirty years ago Xu, as an eleven-year-old boy, had visited his father once in Shanghai begging him to see his sick mother. But his father had a new wife already and later they left China together. Then Shanghai was "liberated" by the Communists, bringing thirty years of political turmoil to the mainland. After such a long departure, the father suddenly goes back to China with a Ms Song and the meeting turns out to be an ironic contrast between two styles of life. The rich father has the air of a fully westernized gentleman

while the poor son cannot rid himself of the smell of the country soil. Father and son look alike in body but their souls are far apart.

Then the son recalls the difficult years during the father's absence. His father left him, his mother was dead, and his uncle took away everything except him. Yet the Party adopted him, educated him, and then gave him a teaching job. Unfortunately at the end of the 1950s, on account of his rich father, he was identified as a Rightist. Deserted by everyone, he was exiled for reeducation through labour to a secluded farm as a horse herdsman. After twenty-two years of labour, he is finally rehabilitated and becomes a teacher again. The difficult journey of life is not an entire waste. It intensifies his feelings towards his friends, his family, his students and his country. In the end, when his father offers to take him and his family abroad, he refuses to leave his homeland -- not only for his beliefs but also for his sense of belonging to the place.

"Soul and body" won the prize of Nationwide Excellent Short Story Award (全國優秀短篇小說獎) in 1980. It was viewed by Ding Ling 丁玲 as a nationalistic eulogy (*yi shou aiguo zhuyi de zan'ge* 一首愛國主義的贊歌) and highly acclaimed by her as "a work with blood, flesh and soul" (*you xue you rou you linghun de zuopin* 有血有肉有靈魂的作品).² Yet Zeng Zhennan 曾鎮南, in "Soul and body, renewing themselves through harsh labour -- On the inner essence of 'Soul and body'" claims

² Ding Ling 丁玲, "A Eulogy to nationalism" ("Yi shou aiguo zhuyi de zan'ge" <一首愛國主義的贊歌>), in *Literary Journal* (*Wenxuebao* 文學報) 2 April 1981.

that the story is more than a nationalistic eulogy. It is in fact a eulogy of the working people as a challenge to the ultra-leftist theory of blood inheritance.³ Other critics regard the work as transcending Scar Literature by portraying the beauty of the wounds and scars from the spiritual, ethical and nationalistic perspectives. There are other essays evaluating the personality of the protagonist Xu Lingjun in terms of heroism and others focused on the marriage of Xu and his wife.⁴

1. Between body and soul

The title "Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>) refers to the relationship between the spiritual and the physical self (*ling* 靈 meaning "spirit" and *rou* 肉 meaning "flesh"). At first glance, the story seems to be more about a deserted son's re-union with his rich father after thirty years of separation, which highlights the difference in life-styles between a socialist and a capitalist man than really a schizophrenic struggle between body and soul as in Zhang's later stories. Zhang

³ Zeng Zhennan 曾鎮南, "Soul and body, renewing themselves through harsh labour -- On the inner essence of 'Soul and body'" ("Ling yu rou, zai yanku de laodongzhong gengxin -- Tan Ling yu rou neizai de yiyun" <靈與肉，在嚴酷的勞動中更新 — 談靈與肉內在的意蘊>), in *Shuofang* 9 (1981, 75-77): 75.

⁴ Of the divergent opinions on "Soul and body" from readers all over China, see the summary by *Shuofang* Commenting Group (*Shuofang* pinglunzu 朔方評論組), ed., "Different views on 'Soul and body' -- Summarized statements on essays and letters received" ("Duiyu 'Ling yu rou' de butong yijian -- laigao laixin zongshu" <對於「靈與肉」的不同意見 — 來稿來信綜述>). In *Shuofang* 9 (1981): 78-80.

Xianliang himself reads the work as the transformation of the mind of an intellectual of capitalist background through physical labour. The reform experience finally helps to move the protagonist spiritually akin to the sentiments of the working people and physically adapted to a life of material poverty.

There is a close resemblance between the life of Zhang Xianliang in reality and Xu in the short story. One may find a one-to-one correspondence between the details of the male protagonist Xu and the background of the writer Zhang. Zhang Xianliang was born in December 1936 in an old bureaucratic family in Nanjing 南京. In a Preface to his book, he mentions a picture of himself taken when he was still an infant in his mother's arms. He says:

這張照片就是讀者看到的我年輕的母親抱著僅有幾個月
的我。地點在南京的祖宅。祖宅位於湖北路，
老外交部後面，是一所很大的花園，名「梅溪山
庄」，據說是我祖父和有名的「辦帥」張勳打麻將
贏來的。（引自〈為這本書寫的話〉，頁594）

In this picture readers can see my young mother holding the several months old me. The place is my ancestral home in Nanjing. My ancestral home is located on Hubei Road at the back of the old Foreign Affairs Department. It is a huge garden compound called "Plum Creek Hamlet." It was said that my grandfather wond it playing mahjong with the famous "pigtailed

general" Zhang Xun. . . .⁵

The above descriptions tell us about the rich family background of Zhang Xianliang. The same background applies to the protagonist Xu Lingjun in "Soul and body." Elsewhere, Zhang admits his similarity in background with Xu Lingjun:

和許靈均一樣，我出身資本家家庭，少年時期生活在十里洋場的上海，見過燈紅酒綠的豪華場面.....
(頁196)

Like Xu Lingjun, I was born in a capitalist family. I lived in vibrant cosmopolitan Shanghai during teenage period. I had seen the extravagant scenes of red lights and green wine. . . .⁶

The realist assumption may rule that the story is a direct reflection of the writer's life. Yet when Zhang himself comments on the relationship between himself and the short story:

⁵ Zhang Xianliang, "Words written for this book" ("Wei zheben shu xie de hua" <為這本書寫的話>), in *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang* (*Zhang Xianliang ji* 《張賢亮集》) (Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi, 1986, 594-595), 594.

⁶ Zhang Xianliang, "Mutations in mind and body" ("Xinling he routi de bianhua" <心靈和肉體的變化>), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 195-201), 196.

因為作品中的主人公和我的出身相同，有同志就問我，這裏面有多少自己的成份？其實，作品的情節是構想的，但感情和細節卻完全「貨真價實」。(頁185)

Since the protagonist in the work has the same background as I, some friends ask me how much has sprung from the elements of the self? In fact, the plot of the work is imaginary, but its sentiments and certain details are completely "real."⁷

The short story is a mixture between the real and the fictitious. It has an imaginary plot with autobiographical details. The true and sincere feelings of the writer are injected into the imaginary framework. Storytelling is in fact a wish fulfilment of the writer. Personal details are re-staged in an imaginary setting to provide a resolution for irreconcilable conflicts in life. The background does give certain hints about the overdetermined work signalling more far-reaching consequence beyond the one-to-one correspondence.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Zhang's entire family moved to Chongqing 重慶. The family went back to Shanghai 上海 after the war. Zhang studied in a

⁷ Zhang Xianliang, "Speaking from the starting point of the single eye of Nelson and the single arm of Kutuzov" ("Cong Kutuzuofu de duyan he Naerxun de duanbi tanqi" <從庫圖佐夫的獨眼和納爾遜的斷臂談起>), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 182-186), 185.

primary school in Shanghai. After the Communist take-over in 1949, he spent his junior secondary school years in Nanjing. Then he moved to the North with his father and continued his study in Beijing. In 1952, his father was arrested because of some dubious "historical problem." Growing up in the care of his mother, Zhang was always being despised and discriminated in his school years. The absence of the father left an indelible trauma in the childhood experience of Zhang.

2. Between self and o/ Other

The disappearance and the return of the father first destroy and then restore the connection between the individual and his ancestral past. However the 22 years of physical labour have already changed the temperament of the son. The story begins with an epigraph from Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*:

他是一個被富人遺棄的兒子..... (頁138)

He was the abandoned son of a rich person. . . .⁸

After being abandoned by his father, Xu's mother dies and his uncle takes away everything except him. Physically and socially, Xu becomes an orphan. Yet the Name of the absent Father still defines him. He is labelled a Rightist and exiled as a herdsman to a secluded farm. For Jacques Lacan, the intrusion of the Father's Law is the moment when the Oedipus Complex -- a child's love instinct directed towards the mother and death instinct towards the father -- is repressed into the Symbolic Stage of

⁸ Zhang Xianliang, "Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 138-165), 138.

substitutions and displacements. The Name of the Father (*nom du père*) is also the NO of the father (*non du père*). It forbids the desire of the infant towards the (m)Other to come to the surface. The infant has to suffer from the trauma of separation hereafter. When it grows up, it is doomed to find substitutes for its psychological Lack.

In Xu's case, the Father's Law is replaced by the Party's Law. In the name of the Party, he is declared a Rightist and is exiled for twenty years from his community. The sense of belonging and security is only restored by his marriage to Xiuzhi. A woman has to be there to re-define the meaning of man. The return of the father is no longer necessary for the child is now grown up and has his own story of love. The short story itself is a wish fulfilment of the writer's childhood trauma, aiming to re-confirm his "meaningful" sufferings during the years of abandonment in the language of love. The trauma of separation in real life is compensated by the union of love in the fictional story.

3. Between Personal ideology and socialist ideology

Zhang Xianliang has discussed the theme of "Soul and body" in terms of socialist ideology:

《靈與肉》的主題是描寫一個大資本階級家庭出身的青年知識分子，在社會主義社會這個特定的社會條件下，在極左思潮盛行的這個特定的歷史時期中，歷盡了艱難困苦，通過了嚴酷的勞動，在精神

上如何獲得了勞動人民的感情和樹立了堅定的社會主義信念，在肉體上如何摒棄了過去的養尊處優而適應了比較貧困的物質生活的。（頁203）

The subject matter of "Soul and body" is to describe a young intellectual of a big capitalist family who under specific social conditions of the socialist society and under the specific historical period of the prevailing ultra leftist current of thoughts, experiences difficulties and hardship and goes through vigorous labour. Spiritually, it is about how he gains the feelings of the working people and establishes firm belief in socialism; physically, how he gives up the past luxury and comfort so as to adapt to a relatively poor material life.⁹

Through the physical training of the body, the spiritual part of the self is transformed.

The short story can be summarized as a eulogy of physical labour:

實質上，《靈與肉》是一支贊美勞動、特別是體力勞動、體力勞動者（裏面的全部主角都是這樣的人）的頌歌。（頁205）

⁹ Zhang Xianliang, "Herdsmen's soul and body" ("Mumaren de ling yu rou" <牧馬人的靈與肉>) in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 202-205), 203.

In fact, "Soul and body" is a eulogy of labour, especially physical labour and physical labourers (In the story all protagonists are of this class). ¹⁰

Zhang Xianliang's own understanding of "Soul and body" recalls many the official ideology of the labour reform camps: mind reform through forced labor. ¹¹ The reality of the inhuman practice imposed onto the body through labour reform is displaced by the psychological imagination of its "contributive" results done onto the soul through the fictional arrangement. In this narrative journey, Zhang has in fact transformed himself from a victim of labour reform into an accomplice of the Communist Government. For Louis Althusser, the State Apparatus functions by violence while the Ideological State Apparatus functions by ideology. ¹² In the case of Zhang Xianliang, 22 years of labour reform has brainwashed his consciousness and silenced his voice. The physical violence done to his body has internalized a repressive apparatus of ideological surveillance onto his mind. Even when storytelling hails him as a subject of his own past and endows him with the power to resist, he still chooses to speak in the voice of the Party. Yet desire is what cannot be satisfied. The repressed layer of the unconscious psyche will return to articulate themselves in the disguised languages of love and sex.

¹⁰ Zhang Xianliang, "Herdsman" 205.

¹¹ Hongda Harry Wu, *Laogai: The Chinese Gulag*, Ted Slingerland, trans., (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview P., 1992), 5.

¹² Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" 145.

Section B: The journey of feelings in the Chinese Gulag

In 1985, Zhang Xianliang published his *Journey of feelings -- Book One of the Revelation of a materialist* (*Ganqing de licheng -- Weiwulunzhe de qishilu de diyibu* 《感情的歷程 — 唯物論者的啓示錄的第一部》). Of Zhang's two major novellas, namely *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》) and *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) were anthologized in the book along with the short story "First kiss." In the Author's note, Zhang Xianliang explains the purpose of the anthology:

海涅說：「世界破碎了，並在詩人身上留下裂痕。」《感情的歷程》是《唯物論者的啓示錄》的第一部，記錄的是世界破碎了時在一位詩人心中留下的裂痕。本書包括一個短篇、一個中篇、一個長篇。分開來，它們可以各自獨立；合起來，便能看出三者描繪的是一個過程，看出裂痕的紋路與走向。（引自〈作者題識〉）

Heine says: "The world is shattered and leaves on the body of the poet a scar." The *Journey of feelings* is Book One of *The Revelation of a Materialist*. What it records is the scar in a poet's heart when the world breaks up. The book includes a short story, a novella, a novel. Viewed separately, they are independent; viewed

together, one can see the three describe a process,

showing the texture and direction of the scar.¹³

The journey of feelings records the scars in a poet's heart when the world broke up. After various historical ruptures in contemporary China, the world falls into disintegration. The poet then becomes a story teller, with the true self of poetry substituted by various fictionalized versions of himself in semi-autobiographical characters. Only through the psychological projection of his own life onto the imaginary figures can Zhang face himself again.

1. Summaries

Love in a dungeon (*Tulao qinghua* <土牢情話>) was first published in the 1st issue of *October* (*Shiyue* 《十月》) in January 1981. The story begins with the male protagonist Shi Zai 石在 meeting his lover in a train station after 12 years' separation. She has married Wang Fuhai 王富海 and is now leading a life of misery and destitution. Twelve years ago, the narrator was locked together with another nine rightists in a prisonhouse to attend re-education classes. Wang Fuhai was then the prefect. Liu Jun 劉俊 was the Director of the place. A young beautiful woman guard Qiao Anping 喬安萍 later fell in love with Shi. During a tempest, one prisoner Song Zheng 宋征 died for lack of care and delay in hospitalization. The prisoners then planned to release the message to his wife to save themselves. Shi Zai tried to make

¹³ Zhang Xianliang, "Author's note" ("Zuozhe tizhi" <作者題識>), in *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感憤的歷程》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1987).

use of Qiao for the delivery of letters. As the situation turned more critical, Qiao tried to steal the key to release Shi. Unfortunately, when Shi was asked to meet Liu Jun, he was so scared that he confessed to Liu the conspiracy. As a result, Qiao was caught and raped by Liu and put under the care of Wang. The wife of Song finally asserted some influence. The re-education class ended and Shi was sent to another secluded farm for 10 years. When everything is over, Shi lives with his guilt and shame for the rest of his life.

Mimosa (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》) was first published in the 2nd issue of *October* (《十月》 *Shiyue*) in 1984. Later, it was anthologized into Zhang Xianliang's *Journey of feelings* (*Ganqing de licheng* 《感情的歷程》) in 1985. The story begins with the trip of Zhang Yonglin 章永璘 to a farm as a free labourer. There he meets other rightists who give him inspiration. But the greatest delight comes from meal-times. He uses all his cunning and knowledge to get more food. He sleeps together with the other Rightists in a corner of the wall in a shabby house. At night, he is tortured by the thought of living only for the sake of survival.

Later Zhang meet a woman Ma Yinghua 馬櫻花. Besides getting extra food from her, he can also have interesting discussions with her. He listens to her songs and talks about poetry with her. He gradually feels a sense of love. He later transfers his sexual desire into the reading of books. In the end, he is suddenly sent to another secluded farm. During the subsequent political movements, he is supervised for 3 years and another 3 years of re-education through labour. When it is time to be released, the Cultural Revolution breaks out and he is ruled to be administered by the

people. In 1970, he is imprisoned. As a result, he can never meet Ma again. Instead Ma would stay in his memory for ever as Mimosa -- the silk tree.

Half of Man is Woman (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) was written in July 1985 and first published in the literary journal *Harvest* 《收穫》 in December 1985. The story begins with Zhang Yonglin 章永璘, a 31-year-old rightist serving in a reform camp, seeing by chance a naked woman Huang Xiangjiu 黃香久 taking a bath in the ditch. The labour reform camp is a place where men and women are kept strictly apart. Women are usually dressed like men. The experience strikes Zhang with new inner conflicts between sex and morality. Eight years later, they meet again on another state farm. Zhang is working as a shepherd while Huang has already married and divorced twice. After so many years, the naked body of Huang has become part of Zhang's memory. Each re-visit to the same scene in his dreams would remind himself of his gendered identity.

With the encouragement of his colleagues, Zhang and Huang in the end become husband and wife. Unfortunately, on their wedding night, Zhang finds himself impotent. Later he has an imaginary dialogue with a gelded horse which told him that the castration complex is not only physical but cultural and intellectual as well. Further imaginary dialogues with Song Jiang 宋江, Zhuang Zi 莊子 and Karl Marx take him deeper into the thinking of politics and society. On one occasion, Zhang discovers that his wife and the Secretary of the farm Cao Xueyi 曹學義 are having an affair. During a great storm, when the dam is about to break, Zhang jumps into the water and seals the hole of the dam. The event makes him a hero on the farm.

His sexual power also recovers with his newly gained confidence and strength. When Huang is fully satisfied in bed, he asks for a divorce. Zhang is now a full man, ready to leave the place and do something for the country.

2. Storytelling and the formation of the ideological self

In the three fictional works, Zhang Xianliang has projected his personal experience onto the male protagonists. The love stories are the wish fulfilments of the writer himself after twenty-two years of physical seclusion and psychological repression in labour reform farms. Zhang has been under different kinds of labour reform and thought rectification for twenty-two years. From 1958 to 1976, Zhang twice underwent re-education through labour, one administered restriction, one people's dictatorship and one imprisonment.¹⁴ After twenty-two years of suffering, the poet of 1957 became a novelist of the 1980s. The trauma of life has transformed him into a desiring subject yearning to re-organize the fragments of the world and re-assemble the broken pieces of his heart.

The journey of feelings is Scar literature written in the disguise of love stories. But it also goes beyond the pungent critiques of the Cultural Revolution and

¹⁴ In his own essays, Zhang Xianliang also talks about the relationship between his twenty-two years of sufferings and his fictional works. See "Speaking from the single eye of Kutuzov and the single arm of Nelson" ("Cong Kutuzuofu de duyan he Naerxun de duanbi tanqi" <從庫圖佐夫的獨眼和納爾遜的斷臂談起>), "A Paper full of nonsense" ("Manzhi huangtangyan" <滿紙荒唐言>) and "Mutations of body and soul" ("Xinling he routi de bianhua" <心靈和肉體的變化>), in Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 182-186, 187-194, 195-201).

probes into deeper philosophical and historical reflections about China and the Chinese intellectuals. The life journey of the Chinese intellectuals in the labour reform camps can be summarized in the Preface of *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》) where he quotes from A. N. Tolstoy:

在清水裏泡三次，在血水裏浴三次，在鹼水裏煮三

次。（頁162）

Soaked in clear water three times, bathed in bloody

water three times, boiled in bitter water three times.¹⁵

In a Prologue to his 1918, Volume 2 of *The Way Through Hell* 《苦難的歷程》，Tolstoy used the above words to describe the difficulty in reforming the thoughts of an intellectual.

The strong wish to participate in society and the steadfast consciousness to engage in politics have always caused Chinese intellectuals to put themselves into the whirlpool of historical movements, into the contradictions of social paradox. As a result, they become the intellectual precursors for the progress of Chinese history and the immediate victims of historical sufferings. Therefore, in literary reflections of history, using the life-journey of the intellectual to reflect the historical movement and structure of the nation has constituted an important stream of Literature of the New Period. Zhang bears the burden of History. He suffers and progresses with the

¹⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Mimosa*, in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 161-338), 162.

national cause. The journey of one man therefore becomes the journey of the entire nation. His critical reflections upon himself have to be understood as self-motivated contemplations of the national body as well.

Storytelling of oneself seems to be personal and more related to the past.

In fact it is everyone's journey which travels towards the future:

但是，我想，不毀滅過去，怎麼重新生活。所以，
我要寫，要寫！要把過去的事寫出來，爲了她，爲
了我，有了有權利要求生活得好一些的人們。無神
論者的上帝是人民。我——這樣一個苟活下來的，
軟弱而淺的無神論者，要寫出我的懺悔，寫出我的
祈禱，祈求上帝——人民保佑：人後不要再發生這
樣的事。（頁8）

But I think, without destroying the past how can one re-
live life. Therefore, I have to write, I have to write! I
have to write down events in the past, for her and for
myself and for those people who have obtained the right
for a better life. The God of the atheists is the people. I
-- a remainder, a weak and shallow atheist, have to write
down my confessions, write down my prayers, beg God
-- and the people to protect me: the same events mustn't

happen again.¹⁶

By fictionalizing his own traumatic experience into novels, by totalizing the wasteful years of imprisonment and labour-reforms as part of an historical process, Zhang gives meaning to life and re-defines his ideological self as a materialist. That may explain why Zhang regards his journey of feelings as the first book of the revelation of a materialist. By re-examining his own past and the recent history of his nation, Zhang Xianliang has been trying hard to meditate upon ways for the rejuvenation of the withered spirit of the Chinese after the destructive years of various political movements under Communist rule. Both the imaginary characters in his literary imaginations and the author himself in reality progress from doubt to confidence, from weakness to strength, and from crisis to recovery. They are reflecting upon their own fate as well as the course of the nation. That is how Zhang Xianliang re-establishes his confidence as a materialist in the time of the three crises of faith (*sanxin weiji* 三信危機) -- in socialism, in Marxism or Maoism and in the leadership of the Communist Party in the 1980s.

According to Althusser, one has to construct one's own subject position in one's material world through the imaginary function of ideology. Literature, or more specifically in Zhang's case storytelling, is one of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) which locate one organically and meaningfully in the lived experience of the world-machine. Balibar and Macherey have argued that literature is not fiction. It produces fiction effects, without which life will become socially futile and historically

¹⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 8.

empty. In the case of Zhang Xianliang, the shattered self after the trauma requires the totalizing process of story-writing to stitch up various fragments of the past. Through the fictional construction of an other (the male protagonists), a new ideological self can then be mapped out.

3. Soul and body in the Chinese Gulag

The three novellas *Love in a dungeon* 《土牢情話》), *Mimosa* (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》) and *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) are semi-autobiographical stories of the writer himself re-staged in an imaginary setting of the labour reform farm. Despite the writer's conscious declaration of the latter two novellas as the first two of a series of nine novellas for the revelation of a materialist, they reveal a new voice of Zhang himself other than the Party's.

Literature is a socially symbolic act aiming for the wish fulfilment of the author and the readers. The language of love and sex is both a substitution and a displacement for deeper psychological significations. Huang Ziping 黃子平 has argued that the fictionalized struggle between body and soul can be understood as the major opposing force in Zhang Xianliang:

靈與肉、必然與偶然，這是張賢亮的創作中「藝術——哲學」思考的兩大焦點。這兩對範疇時常交叉、疊合，既折磨著又安慰著他筆下的主人公。當屬於靈的、屬於必然的東西佔上風的時候，它們仿佛凝

定為信念的兩根支柱。當屬於肉體的、偶然的東西充分地展現的時候，它們更象是翻滾著的感覺的漩渦，也是思想的漩渦。（〈正面展開靈與肉的搏鬥——讀《男人的一半是女人》〉，頁201。）

Body and soul, necessity and co-incidence, these are the two focal points of artistic/ philosophical thinking of Zhang Xianliang's creative works. The two fields often intertwine with and overlap each other, both tormenting and comforting the protagonists of his novels. When things belonging to soul and necessity are in the ascendant, they seem to consolidate into two pillars of belief. When things belonging to body and co-incidence fully present themselves, they are more like the whirlpool of agitated feelings and thoughts.¹⁷

In fact, the relationship between body and soul becomes the structural binarity which afterwards dominates Zhang's semi-autobiographical fictional journey of feelings. As remarked by Zhang, the effect is especially obvious in his *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman*.

¹⁷ Huang Ziping 黃予平, "Frontal disclosure of the struggle between soul and body: Reading *Half of Man is Woman*" ("Zhengmian zhankai ling yu rou de bodou: du Nanren de yiban shi nüren" 〈正面展開靈與肉的搏鬥——讀《男人的一半是女人》〉). *Wenhui Daily* (*Wenhuibao* 《文匯報》). 7 Oct 1985.

In the fictional works mentioned above, we see an emphasis on bodily needs. *Mimosa* (Lühuashu 《綠化樹》) deals with food and *Half of Man is Woman* (Nanren de yiban shi nüren 《男人的一半是女人》) focuses on sex. The physical functions of survival and reproduction seem to take precedence over the mental faculty. Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, mentions that:

. . . in every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations. . . . These methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called "disciplines" ¹⁸

The socio-political condition in the distribution of power since the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1957 and the Cultural Revolution in 1966-76 has turned every oppositional discourse into silence. Thousands of intellectuals were classified as black or foul kind (黑五類, 臭老九). They were sent to cow-sheds (*niupeng* 牛棚) or to labour-reform camps (*laogai ying* 勞改營) to re-learn socialist doctrines from the farmers and the labourers. They were made to recite the mottoes of Chairman

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Alan Sheridan, trans., (London: Penguin, 1977), 136, 137.

Mao under the collective dictatorship of the proletariat. As a result, they lost their freedom of speech and their independence of judgment.

At the height of the Cultural Revolution, the male protagonists in Zhang's novels are forced to speak in the language of the Party. The loss of one's own imaginative world is a kind of castration in the figurative sense. As in the imaginary dialogue between Zhang Yonglin and the big grey horse:

趕快熄滅你創造的欲望，做個安分守己的人，像我
似的做個安分守己的馬。（頁 515）

Put out the desiring fire of your creation and be a
contented man, like me being a contented horse.¹⁹

你要承認既成的事實。這就是命運。命運的力量只
有人遭到不幸的時候才顯示出來。你的信仰、你的
理想、你的雄心，全是徒然，是折磨你的魔障。你
知道得最清楚了：人們爲甚麼要騙我們？就是要剝
奪我們的創造力，以便於你們驅使。如果不騙我
們，我們有自己的自由意志，我們經常表現得比你
們還聰明，你們還怎麼能駕馭我們？（頁 515）

You have to admit the accomplished fact. This is fate.

The power of fate can only be shown when one meets

¹⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》), in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 399- 647), 515.

with mishap. Your beliefs, your ideals, your ambitions
 are all in vain. They are malicious snares to torment
 you. You know most clearly. Why do people castrate
 us? In order to strip of our creativity, for you to harness
 us. Without castrating us, we would have our free will.
 We might keep outsmarting you. How could you ride
 us then? ²⁰

In the fictional works of Zhang Xianliang, the ideal gender relationship between man and woman can be understood in symbolic terms of physical unity, social integrity, ideological completeness and cultural coherence. The failure or success of sexual union should be interpreted and understood accordingly. Linguistic castration can be more far-reaching in its impact than physical castration. The quest for a dialogue with the Party in a fictional context itself is the journey towards completeness. Not just the physical faculty and the biological self yearn for their functional usefulness (in the symbolism of love-making), the aesthetic faculty and the imaginary ego (in the symbolism of story-writing) also desire a recovery of their working grounds as well.

Zhang's fictional journey narrates the mental process of his subject-formation through the ritualistic expiation of sin in self-fictionalization. In their self-examinations in the labour reform camps, intellectuals begin to make confessions. In the same way, the love stories are told as confessions of Zhang's own soul. Storytelling is a form of confession and the psychological journey is an expiation of

²⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Half of Man is Woman* 515.

the writer's own sin:

我要求她的寬恕（頁 5）

I want to beg her forgiveness.²¹

她憑著她滿著濃郁的泥土氣的少女的心，憑著她單純的直感對我傾心相許，但我那已經被扭曲了的心靈卻大大地辜負了她，把她熾熱的愛情浸在我利己主義的冰水之中。（頁 83）

By her young girl's heart heavily soaked with the smell of soil, by her innocent direct feelings she fell in love with me, but at that time my crooked heart has betrayed her passionate heat, plunging it into the cold water of my egocentrism.²²

我能再向她說甚麼呢？深切的懺悔？溫存的安慰？

多情的絮語？熱烈的鼓勵？虔誠的祝福？．．

．．．．． 這一切都是虛偽的，虛偽而多餘！既然那真摯的愛情早已逝去。（頁 7）

What could I say to her? Deep confession? Warm comfort? Amorous words? Heated encouragement? Devout blessings? All these are hypocritical,

²¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 5.

²² Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 83.

hypocritical and superfluous, knowing that true love
was gone! ²³

In storytelling, traces of joy (*dérives de la jouissance*) begin to mix together with the trauma of life:

啊，她往日的細聲碎語抓撓著我的心，回憶的閘門
終於被她打開了，盡管那裏面有毀滅我的烈火。
(頁 8)

Oh, her past delicate voice and fragmentary words
clutched my heart. The sluice-gate of memory was
finally opened by her, even though inside was the fierce
fire to destroy me. ²⁴

All three fictional works are love stories within the confine of the Chinese Gulag. These semi-autobiographical love stories are displaced wish fulfilments of the author's psychological frustrations and physical weaknesses in reality. Mostly the stories re-stage the same unconscious structure from union to separation. The change in language and plot only renews a similar structure in different forms. It re-surfaces as the primal scene the writer repeatedly returns to for temporary satisfaction:

她那天賦的樸實的天真，使她在那混亂的年代裏還
保持著閃光的靈魂；她像一片未經污染的土地，上

²³ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 7.

²⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 8.

面仍然燦爛地開放著鮮花。(頁 83)

Her inborn plain naivete kept her soul shimmering in
this confused era; she was like a piece of
uncontaminated land with fresh flowers blossoming on
it.²⁵

Through his fictional encounter with the female Other, Zhang Xianliang begins to sense his Lack:

我猛地一驚：我看到了一個人！

一個女人！

一個赤裸裸的女人！（頁 437）

I was suddenly astounded: I saw a human being!

A woman!

A naked woman!²⁶

Humanity is re-discovered through the naked body of a woman. The imaginary encounter with the female Other stitches up a re-totalized ego recovering from the trauma of the past. The fallen world of manhood can then be redeemed by the fictional confession of sin and the symbolic baptism of love. Through the symbolic woman, one can find out how the male protagonists re-totalize their fragmentary self after twenty years of suffering in life. His obsession with sex in fact prompts him to

²⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* (*Tulau qinghua* 《土牢情話》), in Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 4-89), 83.

²⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Half of Man is Woman* 437.

encounter the long-time repressed part of himself, without which a man will always feel his incompleteness.

是的，人不應該失去記憶，失去了記憶也就失去了自己。我雖然在這裏度過了那麼艱辛的生活，但也就是在這裏開始認識到生活的美麗。馬櫻花、謝長、海喜喜……雖然都和我失去了聯繫，但這些普通的體力勞動者心靈中的閃光點，和那寶石般的中指紋，已經溶進了我的血液中，成了我變為一種新的人的因素。（頁 337）

Yes, human beings shouldn't lose their memory. Losing memory will also lose themselves. Though I have passed such a difficult life here, I also recognize the beauty of life here. Ma Yinghua, Leader Xie, Hai Xixi. . . . though losing the connection, the shining spots of the heart of normal labourers and the diamond-like middle finger print are melted into my blood and become the elements of my becoming a new man.²⁷

Women serve as a substitutive signifying chain reminding the male protagonist of his Lack. All women are but one woman in the same archetypal

²⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Mimosa*, in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985, 161-338), 337.

Mother image under different names. The gaze of woman defines the man, for it resembles the gaze of/ for the primordial (m)Other.

陡然，她的自殺和母親的去世一下子溝通了。一霎
間，生與死、冷與熱、希望與絕望，柔情與恐懼，
一齊匯聚在一起，我的血液突然橫溢泛濫，長期被
壓抑的憤懣和青春的愛情，像雪山突崩，像狂飆乍
起，以至把我的心迸得粉碎。．．．．．（頁 83,
84）

All of a sudden, her suicide and his mother's death
joined together. In a moment, life and death, cold and
heat, faith and desperation, love and fear all mixed
together. My blood suddenly flooded over. The long
repressed anger and youthful love, like the instant
collapse of snow-capped mountains, like the start of the
wild wind shattered my heart into pieces. ²⁸

Through the fictional encounter with the female Other, Zhang Xianliang can be better prepared psychologically to face his real self in reality. The imaginary experience of love stitches up a re-totalized ego recovering from the trauma of the past. The fallen world of humanity can then be redeemed by the fictional confession of sin and the symbolic baptism of love. The journey of feelings is therefore also a

²⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Love in a dungeon* 83, 84.

journey for the re-discovery of self. As Zhang's journey moves onto the mid-1980s, the language of love gradually gives way to the language of sex. The detached narrator of other people's stories finally becomes a vigorous speaker of his autobiographical story. Each one moves into a passionate confession of his own soul.

Section C. Discourse of sexuality

1. Sex literature and Zhang Xianliang

After the mid-1980s, literary works with implicit sexual concerns or explicit sexual descriptions suddenly emerged on the literary scene of mainland China. One only has to think of Zu Wei's 祖慰 "Fugue of winter, summer and spring -- A Cross-section of love" ("Dongxiachun de fudiao -- Ai de hengduanmian zhi yi" <冬夏春的複調 -- 愛的橫斷面之一>), Gu Hua's 古華 "A Small town named hibiscus" (*Furongzhen* 《芙蓉鎮》) and "Virgin widow" (*Zhennü* 《貞女》), Wang Anyi's 王安憶 "Love in the desolate mountains" (*Huangshan zhi lian* 《荒山之戀》) and "Love in a small city" (*Xiaocheng zhi lian* 《小城之戀》), Mo Yan's 莫言 *The Red Sorghum Family* (*Hong gaoliang jiazu* 《紅高粱家族》) and ("Blond baby" ("Jinfa ying'er" <金髮嬰兒>), Jia Pingwa's 賈平凹 "Mrs Hei" ("Hei shi" <黑氏>), or in the early 1990s, Jia's other work *The Capital of waste* (*Feidu* 《廢都》) and Su Tong's 蘇童 "Droves of wives and concubines" (*Qiqie chengqun* 《妻妾成群》), *Pink ladies* (*Hongfen* 《紅粉》), or *Rice* (*Mi* 《米》).

Much of the so-called "sex literature" (*xing wenxue* 性文學) focuses on forbidden love in plot and portrays forbidden sex explicitly.²⁹ Zhang Xianliang's *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) and *Good morning! Friends* (*Zao'an pengyou* 《早安！朋友》) are both labelled as sex literature in the mainland. *Half of Man is Woman* was written in July 1985 and published in December of the same year by Chinese Literary Union Publishing Co. (Zhongguo Wenlian Chuban Gongsi 中國文聯出版公司). Within half a year, the book was reprinted three times and sold 600,000 copies. The work was also published in literary journals in the mainland which had a readership as big as 200,000 for each issue. Millions of people had read the novel. The novel breaks away from traditional ethics of marriage and socialist ideologies of revolutionary love. It reaches beyond the government sanctioned areas into topics like love, marriage, sex, desire

²⁹ A postgraduate student Zhou Hong 周紅, in "Atavism as a phenomenon that should not have happened -- A Review of the trumpeting of theories on sex literature in recent years" ("Bugai fasheng de 'fanzu xianxiang' -- dui jinnian lai "xing wenxue" lilun guchui zhi jiantao" <不該發生的反祖現象 -- 對近年來性文學理論鼓吹之檢討>)," rpt. in He Guorui 何國瑞, ed., *Debates of rights or wrongs in the literary world* (*Wentan shifei bian* 《文壇是非辯》) (Wuchang: Wuhan daxue, 1991, 385-403) has defined and summarized various kinds of sex literature. In the end, she argues for their elimination for the cause of socialist literary enterprise.

and society, politics, economics and morality. Even the most private affairs between the two sexes are narrated.³⁰

The fictional works of Zhang Xianliang exerted a ground-breaking influence both locally and internationally in the mid 1980s. Zhang gained almost legendary attention through the publication of *Good morning! Friends* (*Zao'an pengyou* 《早安！朋友》) and *Half of Man is Woman* (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》) which broke into the forbidden area of sex in mainland China. Despite his frequent manifestation as a devout materialist who writes with a social mission, Zhang is identified by many as a representative writer for the so-called sex literature (*xing wenxue* 性文學).

Good morning! Friends was written in October 1986 but was banned from being published in mainland China until the mid-1990s. In 1986, *Shuofang* received a diary from a female student in high school. The descriptions inside about affairs of teenagers at puberty were the tip of an iceberg, for there were 50 million high school students in the mainland. After reading the diary, Zhang began to interview some form 2 and 3 students. It took Zhang 40 days to summarize and rewrite the oral information into a reportage titled *Good morning! Friends*. The novel described the

³⁰ Editorial board of Mingchuang publishing co. (Mingchuang chubenshe bianjibu 明窗出版社編輯部), "Preface: A Successful first step of the revelation of a materialist -- *Half of Man is Woman*" ("Xuyan: Weiwulunzhe qishilu chenggong de diyi bu -- *Nanren de yiban shi nüren*" <序言：唯物論者啓示錄成功的第一步 -- 男人的一半是女人>), in *Half of Man is Woman*, 9th ed., (Hong Kong: Mingchuang, 1990).

lives of young people at home and in school, with an emphasis on teenage education. It was intended to be published by *Shuofang*. Before publication, the Young Post of Ningxia (Ningxia qingnin bao 《寧夏青年報》) summarized the 120,000 word novel into an abstract of 8,000 words, deliberately exaggerating the sensual parts of the novel. The abstract caused great agitation among teachers and parents. Over 400,000 copies of the novel already printed by Tianjin Baihua chubanshe were banned from being published.³¹

The publication of Zhang Xianliang's *Half of Man is Woman* in 1985 aroused a great stir in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas. Heated debates on the work's moral and ideological impact made Zhang one of the most widely discussed writers of the decade. Both novels attracted severe criticisms from indignant common readers as well as alarmed Party officials in the mainland. The story of an impotent man and an adulterous woman in *Half of Man is Woman* pioneers a breakthrough in the discussion of sex. The description of a young girl masturbating in *Good morning! Friends* is equally unprecedented. They far exceeded the limits of tolerance in the still conservative mainland. As a document on sexual awakening, both fictional works could be useful for the understanding of social conditions in post-Mao China. However, such a focus should not obscure the larger political and cultural phenomenon the debate uncovers. The discursive control over the story of sex reveals the hidden power relations of the social structure and the political system

³¹ Refer to "The Preface to publication," in *Good morning! Friends* (Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987).

under Communist rule. This is also the place for us to draw the distinction between sex and sexuality.

2. Between sex and sexuality

An historical report on sexual crisis in mainland China may not be as important as a genealogical account of sexuality. Michel Foucault has argued that "power created sexuality as a device to say no to sex."³² Sexuality is what makes sex impossible. It is a discourse which serves to install sex within a network of power relations within the comprehension of knowledge. Discursive strategies function as power apparatuses to control, select, organize and redistribute the production and transmission of knowledge. In 19th century Europe, repression was so vigorously practised that sex was a taboo in social life and a synonym for reproduction in family life. Repression has turned sex into silence. In the later 20th century, not only did people begin to speak of sex, they also set out to formulate the uniform truth of sex inscribed in an ordered system of knowledge. Discourse has turned sex into manageable knowledge.³³ Viewed from this perspective, fictional works from the

³² Colin Gordon, ed, *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* by Michel Foucault, Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham and Kate Soper, trans., (NY: Pantheon Books, 1980), 190.

³³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Robert Hurley, trans., (New York: Vintage Books-Random House, 1978) and "The Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Robert Young, ed. and intro., (London and New York: Routledge, 1981), 48-78.

Chinese mainland which claim to break the forbidden area of sex in the mid-1980s could be understood in relation to the existing power structure of post-Mao China.

The sudden upsurge of fictional works containing sexual description after the mid-1980s was received with severe criticism from the Party officials of mainland China. The Secretarial Office of the Association of Chinese Writers (中國作家協會書記處) held a meeting between Oct 30 and Nov 4, 1985 with one of its major objectives to deal with this "unhealthy" phenomenon in the current literary trend. The then Vice-Chairman of General Affairs of the Association and member of the Communist Central Committee (and later in 1986 the Minister of Culture in mainland China), Wang Meng 王蒙 has criticized the so-called vulgar and tasteless style of some current publications:

近幾個月來，有一個現象，有些刊物競相發表描寫性本能的作品。我相信，有的作家寫這些東西包含著嚴肅探討人生的動機，但也不能不指出，確實有些作品是為招徠讀者，投合某些讀者的低級趣味而炮制的，它們格調低下，乃至於不堪入目。（《文藝報》（周報）一九八五年第十九期）

In the last few months, it so happened that some magazines scrambled for the publication of works with descriptions of the sexual instinct. I believe, some writers writing on this kind of subject matter aim for very serious investigation of life. But one still has to

point out that some of the works are really made to attract more readers, aiming to cater for the low interests of certain readers by tasteless, even unreadable vulgarities.³⁴ (My translation)

Afterwards, the Chief Secretary of the Association of Chinese Writers, Tang Dacheng 唐達成 reinforces Wang's view by saying that:

有的作品熱衷於描寫抽象人性，甚至展覽性心理、性生活，趣味流於低級庸俗。（《瞭望》海外試行版，一九八五年第四期）

Some literary works are eager to describe abstract humanity, even to the extent of exhibiting sex psychology and sexual life. In taste they fall into cheap vulgarity.³⁵ (My translation)

The conservative mainland received such works with both indignation and fear. The deterioration of moral and ethical values of the Chinese readers was used as an excuse to ban even serious works on the same theme.

The real danger comes from the capitalist ideology of individualism and self interest inherent in the liberation of sex. The history of the Party's rectification movements is also the genealogy of sex repression in mainland China. In the mid-

³⁴ In *Literary Arts Journal* (*Wenyibao* 《文藝報》): 19 (1985).

³⁵ In *Liaowang* 4 (1985).

1980s, the focus of attention turned to Zhang's fictional works, especially *Half of Man is Woman* and *Good morning! Friends* for the description of sexual yearnings. Right at the start of the Campaign on Anti-bourgeois liberalism in 1987, Yao Xueyin 姚雪垠 had criticized *Good morning! Friends* as a sex novel contaminating youngsters of the mainland.

Good morning! Friends (*Zao'an pengyou* 《早安！朋友》) was written in October 1986 but was banned from being published in mainland China until the mid-1990s. It was published instead by Yuanjing chubanshe in Taiwan in 1987 and Mingchuang chubanshe in Hong Kong in 1988. The story begins with a form three high-school student Wang Wenming 王文明 suddenly grabbing the breast of his female classmate Xu Yinhua 徐銀花 in the classroom. The impromptu act of the teenage boy arouses immediate agitation in his class, followed by serious scrutinies of its social and ethical implications in the adult world of teachers and parents. The form master Wu Zian's 吳子安 investigation of the event gradually brings into focus the world of teenage boys and girls. One fifth of the students have love affairs before adulthood -- puppy love (*zaolian* 早戀). Some have more intimate contacts with the other sex like kissing and fondling. Wang and Xu, however, belong to the other four fifths of "normal students," meaning that sexual awakening is already present in teenagers of their age before the social event of love-pursuit. Instead of facing reality and solving inherent problems, the authorities turn Wang and Xu into victims. Wang is asked to leave school "voluntarily" for psychiatric reasons. To release herself from the pressure of family and school, Xu becomes addicted to masturbation and eventually commits suicide. Inherent teenage problems could not be attributed to the

existence of unhealthy publications. Impending social crisis could not be solved by oppressive controls of ideology.

The novel as an investigation of teenage sexual awakening angered many of the ruling officials in charge of culture and propaganda in China. In the name of bad moral and social influence, the work was virtually banned from being published in the mainland in the 1980s. Indignant readers blamed Zhang Xianliang for the deterioration of moral and ethical values of the Chinese. Party officials labelled this kind of work as contamination of the socialist cause from the influence of Western capitalism.³⁶

The criticism recalls many of the various rectification movements of the past thirty years and in fact precipitates new literary purges of the intellectuals in the name of moral effect and social influence: the criticism of Bai Hua's 白樺 "Bitter love" ("Kulian" <苦戀>) in 1981, movement against Spiritual Contamination in 1983 and Anti-bourgeois Liberalism in 1987. Here if we try to view the literary text as embedded within a larger socio-cultural process, we can understand what Fredric Jameson has meant by reading the individual text as "crisscrossed and intersected by a

³⁶ One may refer to Zhang San and Ma Mingren's 張散，馬明仁 *Controversial sexual descriptions* (*Youzhengyi de xing'ai miaoxie* 《有爭議的性愛描寫》) (Yanji: Yanbian daxue, 1988) for a collection of articles discussing the impact of Zhang Xianliang and his novel on the deterioration of moral and ethical values among the Chinese.

variety of impulses from contradictory modes of cultural production all at once." ³⁷ The Reform ideology of the 1980s finally reaches the historical juncture when the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic in the field of the superstructure. The capitalist spirit of modernization and westernization cannot be compatible with the tenet of Deng's "socialism with Chinese characteristics." The consequence of the relaxation of Party control and a certain extent of decollectivization and democratization clashes with the four cardinal principles of Deng in his insistence on the socialist path, the people's democratic dictatorship, Communist Party leadership, and Marxism- Leninism- Mao Zedong Thought. The language of sex has to be carefully considered in the new discursive environment.

Deng Xiaoping himself has insisted upon the superiority of socialism even though his economic reform does not in the least conform to the socialist model. "Freedom" and "democracy" belong to the capitalist world. Modernization has nothing to do with liberalism:

我們大陸堅持社會主義，不走資本主義的邪路。 .

. . . 中國在粉碎「四人幫」以後出現一種思潮，
叫資產階級自由化，崇拜西方資本主義國家的「民
主」、「自由」，否定社會主義。這不行。中國要

³⁷ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1989).

搞現代化，絕不能搞自由化，絕不能走西方資本主義道路。（頁878）

We mainland insist upon socialism, not taking the heterodoxical path of capitalism. After the smashing of the Gang of Four, in China there appeared a current known as bourgeois liberalism which worships the "democracy" and "freedom" of Western capitalist countries and negates socialism. This cannot be allowed. China has to get modernized but definitely not liberalized, not taking the path of western capitalism.

Bourgeois liberalism, for Deng, leads towards the path of capitalism. It is the source of conflict and disorder:

在我們的國家，搞資產階級自由化，就是走資本主義道路，就統一不起來。（頁879）

In our country, to follow capitalist liberalism is to embark on the capitalist path, thus being unable to stay united.³⁸

³⁸ Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平, "To follow bourgeois liberalism is to take a capitalist path" ("Gao zichan jieji ziyouhua jiushi zou zibenzhuyi daolu" <搞資產階級自由化就是走資本主義道路>) (1985年5月、6月), in Research Office for Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, ed. *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11th 3rd Plenum*, Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin, 1987, 877-879), 878, 879.

Deng even tries to show his consent to a new Anti-Rightist Campaign to cleanse the spiritual pollution from the West.

反對精神污染的觀點，我至今沒有放棄。 . . . 一

九五七年反對資產階級右派的鬥爭，有太過火的地方，應當平反。但我們對它沒有全盤否定。（頁 1192）

Opposition to spiritual pollution is a viewpoint I have not given up to this day. . . . In 1957, the struggle against capitalist rightist was in part overzealous and wrongs should be redressed, but we have never fully negated it.³⁹

The place where power manifests its influence is also the place where resistance is found. The desire to talk about sex always invokes the pleasure of transgression. In the words of Michel Foucault:

What sustains our eagerness to speak of sex in terms of repression is doubtless this opportunity to speak out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation, and

³⁹ Deng Xiaoping, "Fight against bourgeois liberalism with distinct banner" ("Qizhi xianming di fandui zichan jieji ziyouhua" <旗幟鮮明地反對資產階級自由化>) (1986年12月30日), in Research Office for Documents of Chinese Communist Central Committee, ed., *Selected readings of important manuscripts since the 11 th 3 rd Plenum*, Vol. 2, 1192.

manifold pleasures; to pronounce a discourse that combines the fervor of knowledge, the determination to change the laws, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights.⁴⁰

The language of sex is only a disguise. The pleasure comes from that of transgression. Sexual awakening in fictional works is argued by some others as having the symbolic significance of self assertion and social independence. After several decades of repression, the yearning for freedom in love and claims for individuality have finally gathered enough momentum to challenge the dehumanizing impact of the Party-authorized ideology of Marxist collectivity and socialist materialism.

In Hong Kong, Bi Hua and Guo Liang 璧華，國良 edited a book *Monologue of the sexually depressed -- A Collection of Chinese novels which break the forbidden area of sex* in support of the writers and their works. The book is a collection of Zu Wei's 祖慰 "The Fugue of winter, summer and spring -- A Cross-section of love" ("Dongxiachun de fudiao -- Ai de hengduanmian zhi yi" <冬夏春的複調 -- 愛的橫斷面之一>), Zhang Xianliang's *Half of Man is Woman* and Jia Pingwu's 賈平凹 "Mrs Hei." In the Preface, Bi Hua criticizes the Communist commentators who label works like *Half of Man is Woman* as blue novels aiming to display bestial instincts. She regards that as an ill-conceived tactic to disregard the

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, (NY: Vintage Books- Random House, 1990), 7.

writers' serious investigations of society, humanity and life. Instead she claims that the liberation of sex means the liberation of individuals and the rebirth of humanity.⁴¹

Xu Digao's 許第高 *Novels from mainland China breaking the forbidden area of sex* reviews the sexual descriptions from *A Small town named Hibiscus*, *Virgin widow*, *The Fugue of winter, summer and spring*, *Snake god*, *Love in a desolate Mountain* (*Huangshan zhi lian* 《荒山之戀》) and *Love in a small town* (*Xiaocheng zhi lian* 《小城之戀》), *Judgment of the third party* (*Dui disan zhe de shenpan* 《對第三者的審判》), "Blond baby," *Mimosa* and *Half of Man is Woman*. In his Preface, Xu summarizes various Anti-eroticism Movements (*saohuang yundong* 掃黃運動) in Communist China since 1949. In these movements, even love-stories like Mao Dun's 茅盾 *Corrosion* (*Fushi* 《腐蝕》), Zong Pu's 宗璞 *Red beans* (*Hongdou* 《紅豆》), Deng Youmei's 鄧友梅 *Love on top of the cliff* (*Zai xuanya shang de aiqing* 《在懸崖上的愛情》), Yang Mo's 楊沫 *Song of youth* (*Qingchun zhi ge* 《青春之歌》), Feng Deying's 馮德英 *Flower of bitter vegetable* (*Kucaihua* 《苦菜花》) were identified as full of *petit bourgeois* thoughts. Accordingly, the writers were labelled as rightists

⁴¹ Bi Hua 璧華, "Sexual depression and the recovery of humanity" (Editor's Preface) ("Xinkumen yu renxing de fusu (bianxu) -- Sanpian tupo xingmiaoxie jinqu xiaoshuo shuping" <性苦悶與人性的復興 (編序) -- 三篇突破性描寫禁區小說述評>), in *Monologue of the sexually depressed* (*Xingkumen zhe de dubai -- Zhongguo tupo xingmiaoxie jinqu xiaoshuo huibian* 《性苦悶者的獨白》), Bi Hua and Guo Liang 璧華, 國良 eds., (Hong Kong: Dangdai wenxue yanjiushe 當代文學研究社, 1986), i-viii.

and became vulnerable to various subsequent persecutions. Even works describing love affairs were criticized and re-criticized during various rectification movements, not to say works with more explicit sexual descriptions. Only in the 1980s were writers brave enough to break the forbidden area of sex.⁴²

He Shaojun 賀紹俊 and Pan Kaixiong's 潘凱雄 *Agitations in the garden of Eden: An Essential selection of sex and love stories* has included fictional works like Mo Yan's "Revenge record" ("Fuchou ji" <復仇記>), Liu Heng's "Fuxi, Fuxi," Wang Anyi's "Love in a small city" and Ge Fei's "Lost boat" ("Mizhou" <迷舟>) and others. In their Preface, He and Pan draw the distinction between animal sex and human sex. Animal sex is a direct reflex of the basic instinct. But human sex is more than reproduction. Unlike breathing and digestion, it involves self motivation, personality make-up, social knowledge, cultural modes and physiological functions. Sex is closely related to the essence of mankind, the progress of evolution and the civilization of man. It is an expression of humanity. The major breakthrough of the 1980s is that writers are not just portraying the sex content of social life, but treating it as an important cultural phenomenon for further consideration.⁴³

⁴² Xu Digao 許第高, *Novels from mainland China breaking the forbidden area of sex* (*Zhongguo dalu xiaoshuo dapo xingjinqi shuping* 《中國大陸小說打破性禁區述評》) (Hong Kong: Xiangjiang chubun, 1987).

⁴³ He Shaojun, and Pan Kaixiong 賀紹俊, 潘凱雄, eds., *Agitations in the garden of Eden: An Essential selection of sex and love stories* (*Yidianyuan li de zaodong: xinglian xiaoshuo xuancui* 《伊甸園裏的躁動：性戀小說選萃》) (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue, 1989).

The heated debate in the literary world was joined by sociological studies and journalistic reportage like Dai Qing and Chen Zufen's 戴晴，陳祖芬 *Sexual depressions of China: A documentary report of mainland social problems* ⁴⁴ and Su Xiaokang's 蘇曉康 *The Great divide of men and women: Painful reflections about modern marriage*. ⁴⁵ Both works study and account for the sociological problems of marriage, divorce, co-habitation, extra-marital affairs as well as teenage love-affairs in mainland China of the 1980s. The appearance of sexual descriptions in literary works seems to be not only a national allegory of politics or the psychological obsession of an individual writer but also an impending sociological awakening in the Chinese new generation. The importation of Western values accompanies the Open door policy and the Four Modernization Programs during the Reform decade. It accelerates the rapid disintegration of traditional values about love and marriage and brings forth unprecedented ideological changes. An urgent social reform is anticipated.

⁴⁴ Dai Qing, and Chen Zufen 戴晴，陳祖芬, et al., *Sexual depressions of China: a documentary report of mainland social problems* (Zhongguo de xing kumen: dalu shehui wenti jishi 《中國的性苦悶：大陸的社會問題紀實》) (Taipei: Fengyun shidai, 1989).

⁴⁵ Su Xiaokang 蘇曉康, *The Great divide of men and women: Painful reflections about modern marriage* (Yinyang da liebian: guanyu xiandai hunyin de tongku sikao 《陰陽大裂變 -- 關於現代婚姻的痛苦思考》) (Hongkong: Nanyue, 1989).

Chapter VI **Return of the Repressed: Between Death and Self**

In the previous stage of Zhang Xianliang's fictional journey, we witness the formation of self through the disguised languages of love and sex. Through the mouths of the semi-autobiographical protagonists, Zhang re-tells the most painful experience of himself in the labour reform camps. In this new stage of the journey signified by the novella *Getting used to dying*, the language of death begins to take over. Yet the instinctual energy of death does not just function alone. In extreme psychological moments, sex and death in fact intertwine with each other in the cauldron of the unconscious. The climax of sex is also the climax of death. In the inner mind, there is a subtle connection, even a possible exchange of roles, between joy and fear, sex and death.

Getting used to dying also signifies a new development in Zhang Xianliang's narrative technique. The semi-autobiographical narrator suffers a split in personality resulting in stories being told alternately in the narrative voices of "I," "you" and "he." These are the schizophrenic projections of the author's inner self (or selves). The main plot of *Getting used to dying* is based on Zhang Xianliang's trip to America for an international conference of writers and scholars. Halfway between fact and fiction, the story mingles recollections of the past with imaginations about the female Other. The painful trauma of narrow encounters with death on the mainland and the imaginary pleasure of love-making with different women all over the world become the motivational undercurrents in the interplay of plots.

Section A. Summary of *Getting used to dying*

Getting used to dying (Xiguan siwang 《習慣死亡》) was first published in 1989. The story begins with the vague memory of "I" and "I"'s wish to shoot "he." Only in death can they be united, with pleasure surpassing that of love-making with women. Then the viewpoint jumps to an account of the 23-year-old "he" who tries to commit suicide by hanging himself in the labour reform farm in the moonlight. "He" does not die. Since then "he" and "I" remain separated. The wish to die/ kill goes on, frequently implicated with the desire for sex. "I"'s determination to shoot at "he"'s penis may end all, both as the correction of his crime on earth and the redemption of his sin in heaven.

Writer "he" is on a flight from Beijing to America to attend a conference. While pondering over his actress mistress's gaze in adulterous love-making, he recalls his trial as a counter-revolutionary verdict in mainland China by Communist Party cadres who then passed the death sentence. Fragmentary memories enters his consciousness: the last time making love in his mistress's lodging, another time holding her hands in a cab while listening to the song "love story." In another flashback, "I" and "I"'s mistress embraced each other naked in a bath tub. Then she ran away in cold rain on foot. It ends the extra-marital love affair in Beijing. Arrived at San Francisco, "he" lives in his cousin's wife Jinghui's 靜慧 place. Being alone inside the room, "you" dreams of meeting his mistress at Oakland Airport and dines with her on oysters and whisky at night at Fisherman's Port of the West Coast. Then

they make love in a clean, cheap inn. "You" tries to make a long distance phone call to her and discovers that in reality she is sleeping with another man at the time.

The smell of soya bean powder 黄豆粉 in his room brought "I" back to B City in 1961. "He" was then newly released from the labour reform camp and journeyed to a hospital to find his former lover. He remembered they often had their rendezvous at the cemetery of Y District. She was an orphan raised by a remote uncle who later hanged himself for being labelled as an historical counter-revolutionary. She became a doctor and he met her for the first time for medical treatment three years before. Her association with him, a Rightist, resulted in her transfer to B District. The last letter he sent her from the labour reform camp forged his death and thus ended their relationship. The memory of her glances and the search for her steadfast gaze had then become his only connection with the living world.

Staying comfortably in Jinghui's place, "he" begins to compare the difference in life styles between America and China. The luxuries of modern life in America could not be compared with the glory of his thirty years' hidden memory about China. On the other hand, for him, Jinghui preserves a kind of Oriental grace and beauty unaffected by revolutions on the mainland. Unaware of her husband George having a Korean mistress Jinni 金妮 in New York, Jinghui lives alone with her dog Freedom. Feeling the threat of her attraction, "you" leaves her place. "He" then goes to the Foreign Embassy of China to deliver some local products to the staff. On the plane, "he" remembers last night going to Fisherman's Port alone. In reality

there are no oysters, no whisky and no mistress waiting for him. "You" begins to think of making love with whores and then death may end all.

Many years later in a street in Paris, the aged "you" remembers things that happened in B District in mainland China decades ago. On his way to the hospital of his former lover's, "you" began to confuse memories with illusions. In the hospital, "you" saw himself waiting for the birth of a baby boy. But it was merely a psychological mismatching with the scene of his own son's birth twenty years later. In reality, "you" found his former lover already pregnant. Her eyes had a distancing aloofness which failed to see him at all. Vacillating between reality and fiction, writer "I" can no longer go on telling with the story. The woman has become an ancient poem in the mind. She would not suffer changes though new life experience could constantly facilitate new understanding of her.

Arrived at the East Coast, writer "I" is received in the airport by an American Taiwanese lady who later accompanies him to the international conference of writers and scholars. They have some seductive exchanges and "I" find her sexually attractive. The entire conference resembles certain orgiastic revels. Speakers enjoy the chance of verbal debauchery on stage. After his speech, she drives "I" around Manhattan. She talks about her divorced husband. Her gentle look has the strength of a mother's magnanimous forgiveness. Stripped of the clothes of civilization and back to the primitive state, they make love. "I" then recalls himself on the mainland once being taken with a small girl Lanlan 蘭蘭 to the execution ground

to accompany the shooting of Counter-Revolutionaries where he underwent the experience of death symbolized by the bleeding of China pink 石竹花.

In his imagination, writer "I" and his Taiwanese mistress begin to travel in different parts of the world from Atlantic City to Paris, Nice and Hamburg, looking for places to make love. She sometimes becomes a substitute for his mother, sometimes his doctor lover, sometimes the small girl Lanlan and sometimes Natalie, his future lover in Paris. "I" even imagines a romantic scene of his own death when she travels from America to the Chinese mainland for the last kiss. The imaginary romance is intercut alternately with flashes of memories of "I"'s other experiences of death on the mainland many years ago.

"I" has tried four times in vain to wake his fellow labourers up by his side who are already dead in the labour reform farm. On many occasions under the moonlight, "I" is the only one conscious to feel the touch of death at night. Finally "I" himself is mistaken to be dead and carried away to the morgue. "I" could merely regret wasting the fresh Chinese cabbage root newly exchanged with his fellow for a fountain pen the day before. In another hallucination, "I" sees his ancestors telling him about the decline of the line. Fortunately "I" is finally saved with a Chinese medicine made from soya bean powder by a deaf labourer who was formerly a doctor.

The Taiwanese mistress is away on a trip to South America. Staying in his cousin George's place in New York, "he" receives a phone-call from his actress mistress. She informs him of his latest novel being heavily criticized on the mainland at the moment which could be the precursor of new anti-Rightist political movements.

Joining him at a restaurant in Manhattan, she tells him her plan to marry an aged American. "He" then remembers his first meeting with her at an evening party of the movie industry in China some years before. She was divorced and had four years without sex. After a brief discussion with her on movies and novels, they made love.

Weeks later when "he" returns to the mainland, the fear of persecution is found to be a false alarm. "He" begins to remember how incidents that happened in real life in America seem to alter the plot of his earlier published short story about the re-union of father and son after 30 years of separation. In the story, the impoverished son of China refuses to leave his proletarian life to join his rich father from capitalist America. Yet in reality, the father sent his mistress to America before the Cultural Revolution while he himself stayed on the mainland. Now when "he" visits the father's mistress in New York, she only grumbles about the relics of his dead father's bones. Then "you" begins to remember how he was sent to pick up dead men's bones at the burial mounds of the labour reform farm. These were used to satisfy relatives of the deceased reform labourers who would insist on asking for the bones of the dead.

While listening to her memory about his father, "he" realizes that his own mistresses resemble his father's. He has been looking for the same kind of women as his. He also gains new insights about himself and his real mother. Finally he goes to a brothel with George. The story ends with "you" on a flight back to China. Then the writer "I" also finishes the last word of the novella in his old mistress's place in the Chinese mainland.

Section B: Self-Narration in *Getting used to dying*

The main storyline of *Getting used to dying* is based on Zhang Xianliang's trip from the Chinese mainland to America to an international conference for writers and scholars. However, the account of the trip is patched up with fragmentary recollections of the author's past life experiences and his imaginary romances. The past, the present and the future are haphazardly strung together and parallel plots mismatched with each other are narrated by the alternate personae "I," "he" and "you." The pleasure of self completeness and structural coherence usually found in a normal biographical narrative is constantly disturbed by the threat of schizophrenic disintegration.

In the process of Zhang Xianliang's self-fictionalization, the physical journey is gradually turned into a journey of the mind which delves into the author's deepest consciousness. Every narrow encounter with death and various climactic moments of sex constitute the understanding of Zhang's very self. The story recording the journey is like a mirror reflecting his long repressed psyche:

鏡子，那是我最討厭的東西，我不願見它正如我不
願見我自己。然而後來我在巴黎竟處處見到它，我
無法迴避它正如我無法迴避自己。所以我寫了這麼
多文字。（頁21）

The mirror -- that was my most loathsome thing. I was
unwilling to see it just as I was unwilling to see myself.

But later I saw it everywhere in Paris. I could not avoid it just as I could not avoid myself. That's why, I had written down so many words.¹

The alien culture of the capitalist West forces the author from socialist China to re-examine himself more closely. It gives him a clearer self image: an image he loathes to see but cannot avoid seeing. Every glimpse of reflection reminds him of part of his forgotten self.

The realist mirror of verbal reflection should aim to reveal an image of authenticity, yet the autobiographical record of Zhang's overseas experience is in fact a journey into both real and imaginary worlds. The narrator is torn between memories, realities and fantasies,

他一向都是在回憶和幻想中過日子，以致經常把回憶和幻想當做現實，而現實又是那麼容易地在一瞬間即變成回憶，同時又是那麼容易地產生出幻想。結果，回憶現實幻想攪在一起就分不清了。（頁222）

He had always lived his days in memories and fantasies; so he often mistook memories and fantasies for realities.

¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* (*Xiguan siwang* 《習慣死亡》) (Hongkong: Mingchuang, 1989), 21.

And reality would so easily change to memories in an instant and could so easily give rise to fantasies. As a result, memories, realities and fantasies were all mixed up and became indistinguishable.²

halfway between the real and the fictitious,

我把小說寫到這裏不知道應該怎樣寫下去。我猶豫在真實和虛構之間。(頁91)

I have written this novel up to here and do not know how to go on. I am vacillating between the real and the fictitious.³

and halfway between facts and fantasies,

我的確越來越不會寫小說，我常把事實當成了幻想又把幻想當成了事實。(頁121, 122)

I am in fact more and more incapable of writing fiction.

I often take facts as fantasies and fantasies as facts.⁴

Real incidents that have actually occurred are intertwined with imaginary events. The

² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 222.

³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 91.

⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 121, 122.

main storyline is intruded by flashbacks and flashforwards. This corresponds to Sigmund Freud's claim that day-dreams or fantasies usually fit themselves into the subject's shifting impressions of life. Mental work is linked to some current impressions, some provoking occasions in the present which can somewhat arouse one of the subject's major wishes. From there it harks back to a memory of an earlier experience in which this wish was fulfilled; and it now creates a situation relating to the future which represents a fulfilment of the wish. Thus past, present and future are strung together, as it were, on the thread of the wish that runs through them.⁵

In *Getting used to dying*, fragmentary recollections and momentary fantasies do not fit into each other according to any logical, coherent line of thought. Instead they are haphazardly juxtaposed with shifting impressions of current realities:

可是，回憶現實幻想究竟在哪一點上交會呢？或是

它們永遠也不會交會而是平行向前或向後發展的？

（頁222）

But, at which point do memory, reality and fantasy overlap? Or do they never overlap with each other but develop forward or backward in parallel?⁶

⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day Dreaming," in *Art and Literature*, Albert Dickson, ed., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1985), 135.

⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 222.

Multiple plots developing in parallel only overlap in "the thread of the wish" that runs through them. One can easily discover from the novel that every event narrated begins with either the brightest or the gloomiest moments of the author's:

其實任何事情你都不會理出一個確切的開端，提筆
記載的人只能遵循常規去選擇一個最明亮或者最陰
暗的日子作為開始。（頁195）

In fact you can't arrange anything with a clear beginning.
The writer of the record can only follow common rules
to choose the brightest or the gloomiest day as the
beginning.⁷

In *Getting used to dying*, each new beginning of fragmentary incidents harks back recurrently to reveal experiences intensely cathected with either sex or death, the hidden wishes underlying this stage of Zhang's psychological journey.

Sometimes, sex and death may not be easily distinguished. They overlap with each other in the unconscious:

每一次成功地做愛之後我都會有這種感覺。奇怪的
是這種感覺和被槍斃時的感覺一樣。（頁109）

⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 195.

After every successful love making I would feel the same. Oddly enough, this kind of feeling was the same as being shot dead.⁸

At the climactic moment, transference of excitements and fears between sex and death may occur:

當你發現她的眼睛又充滿恐懼，用全身心迎接即將到的高潮，而你也感覺到槍口正對著你的腦袋因此更加奮進的時候，也許你會想到儘管有槍口對著你而畢竟命運對你不薄。（頁32）

When you discover her eyes once again filled with fear, all body and soul ready to welcome the impending climax, when you feel the gun pointing right at your head and thus thrust further forward even more, maybe you will think even though the gun is pointing at you, fate has not been unkind to you.⁹

The fear of sex is identical to the excitement of death. The intensity of the experience seems rewarding and worth the sufferings in life.

⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 109.

⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 32.

Eros and Thanatos, or sex and death, are argued to be the most elemental forces of human instinct in the field of psychoanalysis. In his interpretation of dreams, Sigmund Freud discovered a hidden layer in the human psyche which he named the unconscious. He claimed that "there cannot be any dreams but wishful dreams."¹⁰ All dreams were wish fulfilments of repressed sexual instincts. However, two decades later, the increasing cases of war neurotics after the First World War convinced him to modify his earlier position. He found out that many patients repeatedly dreamed of the same war which forced them to re-experience fears and anxieties rather than pleasures and satisfactions. The compulsion to repeat (*Wiederholungszwang*) the experience of death in dreams and hallucinations proves that there is something beyond the pleasure principle. It is not the wish for sex but the trauma of death which is haunting the consciousness of many neurotic patients.¹¹

In *Getting used to dying*, the wish for sex has triggered Zhang's imaginary fantasies while the trauma of death reminds him of actual reality. In the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, at the age of twenty-one, Zhang Xianliang was classified as a Rightist:

你被打成「右派」之後你才明白你們一開始就註定
要演出一場悲劇。

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Angela Richards, ed., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1976), 214.

¹¹ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1986), 218- 276.

你別想改變你的命運！這個聲音伴隨了你的一生。

(頁51)

Only when you were labelled as a "Rightist" did you realize you were doomed right from the beginning to perform a tragedy.

Don't ever think of changing your fate! This voice has accompanied you your whole life. ¹²

From 1958 to 1976, he underwent re-education through labour twice, one restrictive administration, one people's dictatorship and one imprisonment. For a prolonged period of time, he was segregated from the opposite sex. He never had a chance to understand women:

他說其實他一點也不理解女人，他連他自己也不理解。他只是覺得有的女人可能是那樣，於是他就那樣寫了。(頁 204)

He said in fact he did not understand women in the least. He did not even understand himself. He simply felt

¹² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 51.

some women may be like that. Therefore he wrote in that way.¹³

His women lack individuality and personality. Their image was constructed out of possibilities rather than realities. They could all be the same stereotypical woman in Zhang's consciousness:

是全世界的女人都一樣還是所有的女人都脫不出我的想像？（頁133）

Were all women in the whole world the same or could all women not go beyond my imagination?¹⁴

Women only exist in his own subjective fantasies and personal imaginations. They were instrumentally modeled for the psychological satisfaction of the writer's repressed wishes:

我的小說，實際上全是幻想。在霜晨雞鳴的荒村，在冷得似鐵的破被中醒來，我可以幻想我身旁有這樣那樣的女人。我撫摸著她她也撫摸著我；在寂寞中她有許多溫柔的話語要安慰我的寂寞。寂寞孤獨喧鬧得五彩繽紛。這樣，到了我有權利寫作並且發

¹³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 204.

¹⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 133.

表作品的時候我便把她們的形象一一落在紙上。

(頁99)

My novels, in fact, are all fantasies. In the frosty morning at cock-crow in a deserted village, waking up in an iron-cold tattered blanket, I could imagine by my side is this or that woman. I touch her and she also touches me; in solitude, she has plenty of soft words to comfort my solitude. Solitude, loneliness create all kinds of colourful noises. Therefore, when I gained the right to write and publish, I put their images on the paper.¹⁵

有人看我的小說寫了一個個愛情故事，以為我在苦難中一定有不少愛情的溫馨，而其實恰恰相反。我說我一直到三十九歲還純潔得和聖徒一樣。我希望在座的男士們不會遭遇到我那樣性壓抑的經歷。

(頁99)

Some people have read my novels of one love story after another and think I must have had much love romance in my time of misery. But just the reverse. I

¹⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 99.

can tell you that until 39 years old I was as pure as an apostle. I hope that those present won't suffer my sexually repressed experience.¹⁶

Mingling truth with falsehood, the writer's self fictionalization resembles the practice of self criticism in Communist China:

你把寫小說也當做寫檢討。因為內容同樣是半真半假。你被真所折磨被假所苦惱。你的這種自我毀滅的慾望就是從那時開始。(頁90)

You took writing novels to be the same as writing self-criticisms since the content was equally half true and half false. You were tortured by the real and vexed by the unreal. These self-destructive wishes of yours started precisely from that moment.¹⁷

The torture of writing about oneself finally links the wish for sex with the wish for death. Zhang has been under different kinds of labour reform and thought rectification for twenty-two years. Several narrow encounters with death in the reform camps have caused the biggest psychological trauma in his unconscious mind. Though he did not die, psychologically the trauma of death is buried deep down in his

¹⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 99.

¹⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 90.

heart:

儘管你沒有真死但你不過是個「漏網」的，正如現在時興的所謂「漏網右派」、「漏網反革命」、「漏網壞分子」一樣。

你是一個「漏網的死人」！（頁54）

Even though you did not actually die, you merely slipped through the net, just like the fashionable so-called slip-through-the-net Rightists, slip-through-the-net Anti-Revolutionaries, slip-through-the-net bad elements.

You are a dead man who slipped through the net! ¹⁸

Many years after the narrator's re-habilitation, the past still comes back to haunt his consciousness. Like the neurotics in Freud's case, he can never get rid of the nightmare. He is forced to return to the scene of death to re-experience the moment of extreme tension from time to time:

這時我不由自主地被夢所控制，夢非要我再次重複死亡的經歷。（頁141）

At that time, I was controlled by the dream. The dream

¹⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 54.

forced me to repeat the experience of death once again.

19

Though physical time moves forward, psychological time regresses to the past:

而時鐘並不是在往前走，卻是往回退，嘀嘀嗒嗒地
把他拖回到過去的死亡。（頁218）

But the clock did not move forward but backward,
ticktacking and dragging him back to death in the past.

20

Even the excitement of sex fails to make him forget the fear of death:

不管是和你，和其他女人做愛以後都會想起那天的
死亡，尤其是在月明之夜。（頁137）

Whether with you, or with other women, after sex I will
always think of death on that day, especially under the
bright moonlight of that night.²¹

Such an experience in the past has become the point of reference for present life. That explains why the author has to get accustomed to dying. It is the only way to calm

¹⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 141.

²⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 218.

²¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 137.

down his restless soul:

過去你把眼睛朝向現在而現在你把眼睛朝向過去。 只有時光回溯到過去的某一點起步直到今天你才算活了一個完整的人生，你的靈魂才會得到安寧。 . . . (頁73)

In the past you turned your eyes towards the present
now you turn your eyes towards the past. . . . Only
regressing time to a specific point in the past till now
could you live a full life, could your soul be at peace. . . .

22

Only the experience of the past can endow the living present with meaning and bestow a sense of completeness on the fragmentary self.

Both physically and psychologically, Zhang Xianliang is in the middle of a journey. He is half way between the past and the future:

在人生兩個階段的交接處你茫然回顧。你總搞不明白你是從哪裏來要向何處去，搞不明白爲甚麼你會坐這裏。(頁88)

In the juncture of two stages in life, you just cannot

²² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 73.

understand where you are coming from and where you are going; and you fail to understand why you are sitting here. ²³

He has lost his way. Since memories of the past preserved in the mind are more solid and reliable than events going to take place in the unforeseeable future, delving into one's consciousness should be the best way to grasp and understand oneself:

未來尚須奮鬥而且渺茫，能夠把握得住的只有對過去的回憶了。你珍惜過去就像別人珍惜未來的歲月一樣。（頁67）

The future world still require more struggle and is full of uncertainty. Only memories about the past could be grasped. You valued the past as others valued the future lying ahead of them. ²⁴

Half way between death and life, the critical moment has come for him to make a decision:

在介乎陽世和陰世的中間地段，我預見到未來的一切都令我沮喪。命運似乎要叫我在這個關鍵時刻作出選擇—要死還是活？（頁173）

²³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 88.

²⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 67.

In between the region of day and night, I foresaw that everything in future would let me down. Fate seemed to ask me to make a choice at this key moment -- life or death? ²⁵

To be or not to be? That is the question. Zhang has to come to terms with himself and choose his own way.

1. Between love and sex

Like Zhang Xianliang in the 1980s, the narrator "you" in the novel is hailed by many commentators as a major writer of realism. Yet looking back, he feels regretful about his use of realism. The so-called realistic narration itself has repressed another layer of text:

二十五年後當評論家說你是「現實主義作家」時你
不禁黯然。有一夜在香港合和中心頂樓的旋轉餐廳
一群文友用一種日本方式來測試你的心理素質後，
斷定你對生活「抱著現實的態度」竟使你神傷。
．．． 只有你知道你的「現實主義」糟踏了多少美
好的東西；你從來掂不出沒有重量的感情的重量。
(頁55)

²⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 173.

Twenty-five years later when the critics talked of you as a "realist writer," you were downcast. One night in the Revolving Restaurant at the top of the Hopewell Centre in Hong Kong, when a group of literati used a Japanese way to test your psychological nature and concluded that you treated life in a realistic manner, you felt wounded. . . . Only you knew how your "realism" had defiled numerous wonderful things; you could never gauge the weight of your weightless feelings.²⁶

Realism is achieved at the expense of the writer's feelings. The conscious ambition to be a great realistic writer has repressed his unconscious wish for sex. Love is being sacrificed for the pursuit of greatness. The more he was devoted to the cause, the quicker would he end the love affair:

每一次戀愛你都全心地投入進去，這恰恰是你不斷
叛變的原因。（頁34）

In each love affair, you were devoted to it wholeheartedly. This was the very reason for your repeated betrayals.²⁷

²⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 55.

²⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 34.

Betrayal is inherent in the nature of his love. He is bound to leave his lover even before the love affairs start:

實際上他在和她、和任何一個女人在進入愛情之前
就已經負心。(頁17)

In fact before he and she or any other women engaged
in a love affair, betrayal was already in his heart.²⁸

The romance of love stories can no longer appeal to the "realistic" writer.
He does not even want to know a woman from the start:

要麼跟你熟悉的女人做愛，要麼和完全陌生的女人
做。你已經沒有興趣和女人一同經過從陌生到熟悉
的全個過程。(頁76)

Either making love with a woman you were familiar
with, or with a woman completely strange to you. You
were no longer interested in going through the whole
process from unfamiliarity to intimacy with any woman.

29

The propensity of love, the weight of the writer's weightless feelings, is only a

²⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 17.

²⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 76.

shimmering disguise for sex:

可是，愛情是甚麼？．．．．． 把閃光的衣衫全部剝去，愛情只不過是赤裸裸的肉體的接觸罷了！
(頁19)

But what was love?. . . Totally stripped of its shimmering clothes, love was merely the touch of naked bodies.³⁰

Sigmund Freud has regarded artistic activity and civilized behaviour as certain ways of sublimation for sex.³¹ In the new age, in the reverse, sex has become the sublimation of love for both men and women:

把相愛僅僅等同於做愛，人類的愛情在我們這個時代得到了昇華。在這方面，男女都一樣。(頁82)

Love being merely the equivalent of love making, human love has been sublimated in our age. In this respect, men and women are the same.³²

³⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 19.

³¹ Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on Sexuality*, in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, Anna Freud, comp., James Strachey, trans., (London: Penguin, 1986, 277- 375), 319, 371.

³² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 82.

All women in the world are the same. If sex is the ultimate aim and feelings are not attached to the individual, any women will be suitable for the purpose:

世界上到處都有女人而世界上所有女人都一樣。(頁
82)

Everywhere in the world there were women and
everywhere in the world all women were the same.³³

In the mundane world of our age, love is reduced to sex.

In the religious sense, the ritual of sacrificial love and the grace of heavenly redemption are the most sublimated theme of Christianity in the West. Now even the sacred image of Jesus becomes a tempting symbol of sex:

你說我性感得和耶穌一樣。(頁144)

You said I was as sexy as Jesus.³⁴

In his personal aspirations for greatness, Zhang Xianliang likes to compare himself with Jesus, claiming implicitly in a self-aggrandizing manner that his own suffering works for the redemption of all the Chinese.³⁵ Yet the masochistic pleasure of blood

³³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 82.

³⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 144.

³⁵ Zhang Xianliang in fact has printed his own photo in Jerusalem taken in front of the slate on which the dead body of Jesus was cleaned. See the front pages in Vol. 1 of *Selected works Zhang*

and pain is hidden underneath the grand narrative of religious suffering:

耶穌因為他[祂]的赤裸而具有性感，祂臉上的苦痛表情和身上鮮血使女人產生性愛的衝動。你曾說過血最能引起女人性慾，那天你正是看到我身上有血才張開兩臂將我摟得緊緊地搖晃。（頁145）

Jesus was sexy for his [His] nakedness. The expression of pain on His face and the blood on His body arouses the sexual impulse of women. You once said blood is what excites women's sexual desire most. That day it was because of seeing blood on my body that you opened your arms and rocked and held me tight.³⁶

Heavenly redemption is unreliable and unfathomable. The sacred rituals of sacrifice and redemption have become the source for sexual attractions.

As life in this world is short and evanescent, death will come one day and shut everybody's eyes. There is no time for the appreciation of physical beauty. There is only time for the enjoyment of physical love:

那時你只想要去看一看她的眼睛，而這時你已經悟到了所有女人的眼睛和你的眼睛最終都會緊緊地關

Xianliang (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985).

³⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 145.

閉，於是你只想和女人做愛。只有做愛是真實的。

(頁76)

At that time, you only wanted to see her eyes. But now you have already realized that all women's eyes and your own eyes would close tightly one day. Therefore you only want to make love with women. Only love-making is real.³⁷

Only love-making is real and substantial. Yet the union of sex fails to bring forth any emotional comfort:

因為我知道我並沒有安慰住你你也沒有安慰住我，
交歡的那一瞬間過去我們又各分東西，我們合在一起
只有雙方都被砸得粉碎。(頁136)

Because I know I did not comfort you and you did not comfort me and after our brief session of physical pleasure, we went our separate ways east and west. Our joining together would only shatter both of us into pieces.³⁸

當我們都粉身碎骨之後便分不出你我。(頁136)

³⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 76.

³⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 136.

After we are shattered, we will no longer be able to distinguish between you and me.³⁹

Human beings are floating bubbles accidentally splashed out by the cold rain of reality. They simply exist and die out of chance. Men and women are haphazardly strung together by the common wish for sex. The relationship is as fragile as two overlapped air bubbles, ready to break at any moment:

你的顫抖使我想到我們兩人只不過是冷雨敲出兩個重疊的水泡。我們不能分開。也不能合成一個——你破，我也便破了！（頁21，22）

Your shivering made me think of us as merely two overlapped bubbles in splashes of the cold rain. We cannot be separated, nor can we be joined as one -- if you break up, I will break up too.⁴⁰

Men and women are mutually dependent, yet mutually destructive.

2. Between self and the Other

Sigmund Freud regards the wish for sex (and later death) as the elemental forces of the human unconscious. For Jacques Lacan, the German word wish

³⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 136.

⁴⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 21, 22.

(*Wunsch*) has to be more detailedly distinguished as need (*besoin*), demand (*demande*) and desire (*désir*). Need refers to the physical, somatic needs. It includes Freud's sex but also food and warmth as well as other bodily necessities. Psychological demand minus physical need equals desire. Desire is what cannot be satisfied. It is the feeling of lack, the awareness that something else -- the Other (l'Autre) -- is still missing after the physical satisfaction of each demand. The sense of incompleteness will drive the self to search for lesser substitutes (*objet petit a*) and get temporary satisfaction. One after another, again and again, what is lost can never be recovered. ⁴¹

In *Getting used to dying*, for some time, love means sex and woman means the physical body. Yet soon, the psychological demand proves to be greater than the physical need. Something is still lacking after sex:

我以為我從此以後會滿足了其實以後並沒有滿足。

人對於滿足總是健忘。（頁81）

I thought hereafter I would be satisfied but in fact I was not. Human beings are always forgetful when it comes to satisfaction. ⁴²

Even when the need for food and sex are fulfilled, desire is still there yearning to be satisfied:

⁴¹ Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1986), 69-89.

⁴² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 81.

你一面嚼著麵包一面看著她逐漸小了下去。你充實了你的胃，卻失去了她對你凝眸的目光。（頁56）

On the one hand you were chewing bread and on the other seeing her gradually dwindling. You fed your stomach but lost her steadfast gaze at you.⁴³

The desiring subject longs for a steadfast gaze from the opposite sex. The radiance from the eyes is the source of inspiration. It shines forth the energy of imagination for the portrait of the world and the narration of the self:

但我拿著筆一定要尋找你的眼睛，不然我這小說便無法續往下寫。．．．．．我發現一位位畫家都是先從對象的眼睛開始畫起。在透明的陽光下我看到一隻隻神采飛揚的眼睛。於是，現在，我只有將那些眼睛的光芒全放在你的眼睛裏。（頁98）

But holding the pen I must search for your eyes, otherwise my novel cannot go on. . . . I find that every painter will begin to draw from his object's eyes. In the transparent sunlight I see one eye after another full of

⁴³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 56.

radiating vigour. Therefore, now, I have to put all the radiance of those other eyes into yours. ⁴⁴

Radiance should be shone forth from the eyes. But now the dazzling vigour precedes the physical eyes. For Jacques Lacan, the split between the eye and the gaze occurs when the latter exists before the former. ⁴⁵ What the writer "I" wants is the radiating energy from the Other's gaze. Eyes of a particular woman in a particular time can merely serve for a temporary actualization of the process.

When writer "he" grows old and looks back, he discovers the history of his life can only be connected by one woman after another:

在他六十五歲那一年，他回顧他一生的各個階段都是憑靠一個個女人來連接的，沒有女人的日子全在記憶之外。也許這是「男人」這個詞能成為一個整體概念的原因？（頁19）

In that year when he was 65, he looked back towards every stage of his entire life to find that they were connected by one woman after another. Days without

⁴⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 98.

⁴⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-analysis*, Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., Alan Sheridan, trans., (London: Penguin, 1977, 67- 78), 72.

woman were all outside his memory. Maybe this is the reason why the term "man" is an integral concept.⁴⁶

Memories of different women bestow on the fragmentary past a sense of totality and completeness. In the ongoing journey of life, the self is forever drifting apart until accidentally fixated by some woman:

你捕捉到我我也願意被你所捕捉。被你捕捉到了我
便不會再有飄流的感覺。

你的手心是我暫時的窩。(頁80)

You captured me and I was willing to be captured by
you. After being captured by you, I would no longer
have the feeling of drifting apart.

The centre of your palm was my temporary nest.⁴⁷

Each brief stay with the opposite sex gives man a temporary resting space and a sense of belonging and security.

Everywhere is woman and every woman is the same. In the memory of man, women become an endless chain of signifiers:

⁴⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 19.

⁴⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 80.

我就是這樣在記憶中一個一個地收集女人的背影。

(頁24)

I was in this way one by one recollecting women's
receding shadows in my memories. ⁴⁸

Substituting one with the other does not make any real difference. The lingering trace
of one resembles that of the others:

今天我在這裏回憶往事，納塔麗走了你走了她走了。 我看看納塔麗的背影和酷似她的背影，納塔麗的背影像我能夠回憶得起來的一切背影。(頁98)

Today I am here remembering the past. Natalie was
gone you were gone she was gone. . . . I steal a look at
Natalie's receding shadow and what resembles hers.
Natalie's receding shadow resembles all shadows I can
remember. ⁴⁹

Comings and goings, all his women left him. One can hold a physical woman tightly,
but not the psychological past:

⁴⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 24.

⁴⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 98.

我把你更加摟緊，想把過去摟抱回來。(頁21)

I held you even tighter, hoping to gather the past back in
my embrace. ⁵⁰

What is lost can never be recovered,

醉醒香消，所有過去的事情都不可挽回了！(頁55)

With drunkenness recovered and fragrant smell
dispersed, all the events past could never be redeemed!

⁵¹

only leaving in man's memory shadows of the past:

然而你記住的只剩下了她離你而去的背影。(頁56)

But you could only remember her backshadow leaving
you. ⁵²

What is forgotten will be sublimated,

⁵⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 21.

⁵¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 55.

⁵² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 56.

你以為你忘卻了她而其實她已經成了你心中的古詩。她雖然失去了青春卻也不會再衰老。你在不同的境遇和情緒中對她有不同的理解。(頁91)

You thought you had forgotten her but in fact she had already become an ancient poem in your mind. Although losing her youthfulness she would no longer grow old. In different situations and mood, you would understand her differently. ⁵³

and the journey of search will go on for ever:

只有她的影子使你有希望繼續往前走。(頁49)

Only her shadow could give you hope to keep going. ⁵⁴

When the memory of the gaze is lost, the connection with the external world will be broken:

你一定要沿著這條小路去尋找。如果失去對她眼睛的記憶你便如同一塊從天外偶然掉落在這個地上的無生命的隕石。她是你和這個世界的聯繫(正如你在奧克蘭機場把她的眼睛當作東西兩半的聯繫一

⁵³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 91.

⁵⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 49.

樣。天啊！) 這個世界儘管骯髒，但有了她的眼睛就有了光采，使你還有生活下去的興趣。你裹著一身風沙投入她的藥香，你要向她訴說你後來洞悉了她的眼睛。(頁56, 57)

You must search along this small path. If the memory of her gaze was lost, you would be like a lifeless meteor fallen accidentally onto this world from outer space. She was your only connection with this world (like in Oakland Airport you regarded her eyes as the connection between the Eastern and the Western Hemisphere. God!). Though this world was filthy, with her eyes, there would be radiance to give you the interest to go on with life. ⁵⁵

The fetishized eyes ⁵⁶ will then be taken as substitutes:

眼睛留了下來，月亮卻永遠地失去。(頁198)

The eyes were kept, yet the moon was lost for ever. ⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 56, 57.

⁵⁶ For fetishism, see Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on Sexuality*, in *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* 297- 299.

⁵⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 198.

Eyes can be found, but not the radiance of the gaze symbolized by the *yin* principle of the moon.

In the joy (*la jouissance*) of union with the symbolic Other, the physical self disappears. The eyes is segregated from the ephemeral body and become part of the transcendental moon:

在月亮的裏抱中我失去了身軀，失去了陽具，只剩
下一對眼睛。我的眼睛和月亮貼到了一起。（頁136）

In the embrace of the moon, I lost my body, penis, only
eyes remained. My eyes and the moon were stuck
together.⁵⁸

Psychologically, the experience only happens once. All future encounters with the next full moon are repetitions of the first union:

透過模糊的淚水，他驀然發現月亮。．．．．．一瞬
間月亮便躍到小樹林上面。橙色的月亮好大好大。
許多年後他都能一直看見那輪月亮。那樣的月亮和
那樣的月光，宇宙間只能出現一次。後來他看到的
所有的月亮，不過是那輪圓月的複製品。（頁5）

⁵⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 136

Through tears, he suddenly discovered the moon.

In a moment the moon jumped to the top of the small forest. The orange moon was very very big. After many years, he could still see the full moon. Such a moon and such a moonbeam in the universe could only appear once. Later, all the moons he saw were merely the duplicate of this round moon.⁵⁹

Self is structured by constant yearnings for something which is not there. For Jacques Lacan, desire is a relation of being to the lack. It is generated by the residual effects of joy (*les dérives de la jouissance*) of primordial union between an infant and its mother. All desires are repetitions of this first Desire of/ for the (m)Other (*Désir de la mere/ l'Autre*). The first awareness that the mother is not part of itself results in the first trauma of separation. The story from union to separation becomes the primal scene staging an unconscious structure in the infant's psyche, to be repeated again and again in the future life journey of the self.⁶⁰

Zhang Xianliang had undergone re-education through labour twice, one restrictive administration, one people's dictatorship and one imprisonment. In the time of miseries and sufferings, he desires the pitying gaze of the (m)Other. All the loving eyes from his imaginary women are substitutes for the mother's eyes:

⁵⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 5.

⁶⁰ Jacques Lacan, Book II of *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Jacques-Alain Miller, ed., Sylvana Tomaselli, trans., (NY: Cambridge UP, 1988), 221-234.

凝望她的眼睛裏有一層可以想像的淚水。每在危難的時刻便有女人來憐憫。他從每一個憐憫他的女人的眼睛裏都能看見母親的眼睛。(頁199)

Gazing at her eyes there is a layer of imaginable tears. In every moment of danger will a woman come to pity him. In the eyes of every pitying woman can he see his mother's eyes.⁶¹

After his rehabilitation in 1979, marriage or comradeship from a woman can no longer compensate for Zhang's loss. Only residual memories of the primordial (m)Other can revive in him the joy of love:

但他早已感受到婚姻的不幸是中國所有重大社會問題中的一個；不正常的社會進程造成了眾多命運的不正常。他的不幸在於已喪失了對幸福的感覺；她的不幸在於她不理解曾幾次瀕臨死亡的男人，不善於用女性的手把他靈魂的碎片一塊塊貼在家庭的牆壁上；他要的是一個母親而她卻只能充當一個「同志」，於是他只得四處亂飛去尋找。(頁58)

But he had long felt unhappiness in marriage was one of

⁶¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 199.

the biggest social problems in China. Abnormal social development had made many cases of abnormal fate. His unhappiness rested in the loss of feelings of happiness. Her unhappiness rested in her failure to understand a man who narrowly escaped death several times. She fails to use her feminine hands to sew up fragments of his soul bit by bit and glue them on a family wall. What he wants is a mother but she could only be a comrade. That's why he has to look everywhere for one.⁶²

All the desiring gaze aims at the primordial (m)Other. By means of substitutions, "I" can see eyes of the mother in different women's eyes,

我一時從你眼睛裏又看到我母親的眼睛。(頁164)

I suddenly see my mother's eyes in your eyes.⁶³

sense the smell of the mother from all women's smells,

你曾聰明地猜到我一定是從你的身上嗅到了我母親的氣味，並且還答應過我今後不論我們在哪裏相會你都不用香水。(頁162)

⁶² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 58.

⁶³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 164.

You have wisely guessed I must have smelt from you
my mother's smell. And promised me thereafter
wherever our rendezvous might be, you would not use
perfume. ⁶⁴

and feel the mother's body from every woman's body:

我多麼想從你的身上回到我母親的身上去。(頁162)

How much I want to go back to my mother's body from
yours. ⁶⁵

They revive residual memories of primordial joy.

The first experience stages the primal scene of love, a story to be repeated
in each new encounter with the substitutes:

他早知道自己愛任何一個女人時都是絕對真誠的，
從那第一個開始。正因為失去了第一個於是他就永
遠在尋找第一個，一直要找到永遠也找不到為止。

而永遠也找不到卻又意味著在每一個女人身上都找
到了她。愛並不是永誌不忘，而是火鑱敲出的火
星。(頁197)

⁶⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 162.

⁶⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 162.

He knew long ago that beginning from the first one his love towards every woman is absolutely genuine. Precisely because of losing the first one, he has to search for the first one for ever, until he can find no others any more.

And never finding her means he can find her in the body of every woman. Love is not unforgettable, but sparks of fire from the flint.⁶⁶

The sparks of fire are ignited again and again: once in a graveyard,

儘管愛情可以在一生中多次重複，但那墓地中的幸福一生中只能有一次。（頁52）

Even though love could be repeated many times in life, that happiness I had in the cemetery can only be experienced in life once.⁶⁷

and again on the deathbed:

我還記得那時我又一次地捧起下弦月們放到我的唇邊。請原諒，這種親吻我曾多次和別的女人重複。

⁶⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 197.

⁶⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 52.

第一次親吻以後的數次是我想續尋找那第一次的感覺。(頁166)

I still remembered at that time I held up the crescent moons one by one to my lips. Please forgive me. I had repeated this kind of intimate kiss with other women. The other occasions after my first kiss were aimed at re-experiencing the feeling of the first time. ⁶⁸

They are all psychological compensations for the first loss. The death of the mother casts a shadow in Zhang's unconscious, the same shadow of loss to be found in every woman:

我的母親已經去世，所有的女人只給我留下了一個背影。(頁109)

My mother is already dead. All women leave me only their receding shadows. ⁶⁹

All receding shadows are but one shadow:

這一生你只能留住一個背影，你這樣想。(頁75)

In this life you can only keep one receding shadow, you

⁶⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 166.

⁶⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 109.

thought.⁷⁰

All stories are but one, ending in the same trauma of separation.

3. Between personal wish and socialist ideology

Self-formation cannot be free from the historical process of socialization. In mainland China, Zhang Xianliang's primordial wish is overwritten by socialist ideology. His first love towards his mother was interrupted by the tutor from the Communist Party who informed him of class distinctions:

我記得我曾愛過我的母親。但我的導師卻告誡我

「不應該」愛她。．．．．．（頁165）

I remember I have loved my mother. But my tutor
warned me I "should not" love her. . . .⁷¹

By drawing a clear line between mother and son, Zhang can then turn away from his capitalist parentage. However, the fulfilment of the Party's wish at one level has repressed another layer of text in his personal unconscious:

他僅僅用一根手指就推倒了我原始的愛情猶如觸了

第一張多米諾骨牌。因此我的愛就一敗塗地如同害

⁷⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 75.

⁷¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 165.

了陽痿病，在任何可愛的東西面前都不能勃起。後來與其說我在四處尋找可愛的女人不如說我在力想調動自身中那種尚能愛別人的感覺。（頁165）

He merely used one finger to push down my primitive love in the same way as the first piece of domino. Therefore my love collapses like suffering from impotence, unable to have an erection in front of all lovely things. Later rather than saying that I look for lovely women, I am laboriously thinking of mobilizing the loveable feelings in my body.⁷²

This is the first trauma of Zhang in the social ideological context. Psychologically, it ends the Imaginary Stage of the narcissistic self and begins the Symbolic Stage with the intrusion of the Father's Law.⁷³ Under the Name (*nom*) of class struggle, the Party tutor says “no” to the love between mother and son. The socialist ideology of the Chinese Communist introduces the law of reality which forbids the self from unifying with his first object of desire. The trauma results in Zhang's physical impotence in sex and psychological impotence in love:

⁷² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 165.

⁷³ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, Alan Sheridan, trans., (London: Routledge, 1977), 217.

為此我暗暗地感謝我們的禁慾主義和把我多年置於
無慾可縱的社會狀態。（頁96）

For that reason I privately thanked our puritanism and
the social condition which for many years kept me away
from debauchery.⁷⁴

The consequence is socially conditioned and then self internalized.

The gaze connects the self with the desiring (m)Other while language joins the secluded self with the external world. For Jacques Lacan, the unconscious is constituted by the effects of speech on the subject. It is the dimension in which the subject is determined in the development of the effects of speech. Consequently the unconscious is structured like a language.⁷⁵ In *Getting used to dying*, the loss of meaning in words has affected the subject formation of Zhang Xianliang significantly:

因為那次演習之後他迷戀於所謂生活的「意義」，
迷戀於華麗誇張矯情之詞，把這類語言奉為人類思
想的成果，所以語言之外的真實的現實常常搞得他
痛不欲生。凡是試圖用語言去概括和表達超語言的
意境的人都會遇到這樣的下場。所以他經常想到
死，死亡成了他的習慣。（頁7）

⁷⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 96.

⁷⁵ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* 149.

After that rehearsal he became addicted to the so-called meaning of life, to flamboyant and affected words and regarded this kind of language as the fruit of human philosophy. Therefore the actual reality outside language often troubled him into suicidal pain. Whoever tries to use language to summarize and express the state beyond language will suffer this consequence. Therefore he always thinks of death. Death has become his habit.⁷⁶

The experience of accompanying condemned prisoners to the execution ground seems to Zhang a rehearsal for his entrance to the world of falsity. Language as empty signifiers has then structured his unconscious. The lack of meaning in words resembles the lack of meaning in life. It is such effects of speech on the subject which get him used to dying.

Hereafter the trauma of emptiness repeats itself on every occasion. It resurfaces as empty promises in the relationship of love,

他和女人說的每一句話最終都會跌落在地上摔得粉碎，遍地撒滿毫無意義的黑點。（頁18）

⁷⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 7.

Every word he said to women would eventually fall on the ground and be smashed everywhere into meaningless dark specks.⁷⁷

and as empty explanations for the cause of death:

其實他為甚麼要去死和為甚麼又不想死的動機和意義他永遠也不能理解，更說不明白。他只能用華麗誇張矯情之詞來填滿所謂生活的「意義」。他雖然活了下來，但從此便善於欺騙自己和善於欺騙別人。（頁6）

In fact he could never understand let alone explain the motive and meaning behind his wish to die and the cause of his unwillingness to die. He could only use flamboyant and affected words to fill the so-called "meaning" of life. Even though he survived, thereafter he was merely good at deceiving himself and others.⁷⁸

The emptiness of language conveys the emptiness of life. Words are used to cover up the failure of understanding and the lack of communication. The wall of language has blocked the natural relationship between man and woman,

⁷⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 18.

⁷⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 6.

她和他「沒有共同的語言」。(頁196)

She and he "had no common language" ⁷⁹

and between one race and another,

我不會說英語，不會說法語，在和所有外國人的對

話中我失去了自己的語言。(頁127)

I could not speak English, could not speak French. In
my dialogues with all foreigners I lost my own language.

80

and even among people of the same race:

但在和中國人談話時我又發覺我們相互沒聽懂對方

說的是甚麼。(頁127)

But in dialogue with Chinese, I discovered we did not
understand what each other was saying. ⁸¹

The self and the world are separated by the wall of language. Suffering from aphasia,
all communication then fails to function. The writer can merely speak to himself in

⁷⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 196.

⁸⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 127.

⁸¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 127.

schizophrenic dialogues.

我只有把所有的話留給自己對自己說。(頁127)

I could only keep all the words for myself.⁸²

The formation of self is responsive to the social institution. For Louis Althusser, Ideological State Apparatuses function unconsciously, being already installed and inscribed in various institutionalized social practices. Ideology exists and can only exist in a material ideological apparatus, prescribing material practices governed by a material ritual. It is the system of representation by which "men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form."⁸³ Through an ideological mirror, individuals are hailed and interpellated as subjects. Ideology is the unconscious means of structuration by which men mis/understand their world and locate themselves in society.

In *Getting used to dying*, aphasia is caused by repressions from twenty odd years of continuous political movements in mainland China:

經過了二十多年的批判鬥爭坦白交待反複檢查大會
小會遊街示眾即席答辯的中國知識分子，沒有一個
不擅長於口才。中國不停的政治運動不斷地成批成

⁸² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 127.

⁸³ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Ben Brewster, trans., (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, 127- 186), 163.

批造就出語言大師。不會說話的人全死了，誰叫他
不會說話呢！死得活該！活下來的人全是會說話會
寫檢討因而個個乖巧。（頁99，100）

After twenty odd years of criticism, struggle, frank
confession, repeated scrutiny, big meetings, small
meetings, parades in public, impromptu question and
answer sessions, none of the Chinese intellectuals fail to
show their rhetorical eloquence. Continuous political
movements go on to create one batch of language
masters after another. Those who fail in rhetoric are all
dead. Who is to be blamed but their inability to speak!
They deserve to die! Those who survive can all speak,
write self criticisms and therefore are obedient.⁸⁴

The material practices of self criticism, confessions and scrutiny plus public meetings,
parades and cross-examinations finally result in the inflation of language and the
degradation of oneself:

你知道那種審查是非常嚴格的，一句話一句話必須
要像編了號的鏈條環節一般啣接上，不然就會送掉
性命或挨頓毒打。這種訓練造就了我現在寫小說的

⁸⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 99, 100.

才能。審查者要追究被審查者的歷史而被審查者要不斷地編造自己的歷史和與人的對話，就和讀小說與寫小說一樣。對白要求之嚴謹，培養了無數莎士比亞。（頁 102）

You know that kind of scrutiny is very strict. One phrase after another must be like rings of chains connected in serial numbers. Otherwise death or savage beatings may follow. This kind of training has forged my ability as a novelist. The scrutineer has to trace the scrutinee's past and the scrutinee has to fabricate his own history and conversations with others, like reading and writing a novel. The strict requirements for dialogues have nourished many Shakespeares.⁸⁵

A new system of imaginary representation is fabricated to re-write histories and dialogues. Through the effect of language, the ritualistic practice is finally internalized and merges with the ideological self:

對我多年的批判養成了我時時自我批判的習慣。
（頁 143）

So many years of criticism against me have nourished

⁸⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 102.

my habit of frequent self criticism.⁸⁶

The way he is addressed and criticised in public causes a split in personality. The conflict between self and society becomes a conflict in the inner psyche. The fear of others turns into the fear of oneself:

他之所以那麼害怕批判是因為批判者的聲音早就在他自己心裏嘖嘖喳喳，那是他不斷自我批判的繼續。如今披露在報紙上的文字他看起來那麼熟悉不是因為他看慣了，而是原本在他心中時常想的語言。他和批判者的衝突就是他內心的矛盾；批判是他本身的外化。人不害怕別人，但會害怕自己，所以他會害怕。（頁232）

He is so afraid of criticism because the critic's voice has long been inside himself in murmurings, as a continuation of his ceaseless self criticism. Now words published in the newspaper in his eyes look familiar not because he is used to them, but because they are words originated in his mind. The conflict between him and the critic is one inside his mind. Criticism is his own externalization. Men are not afraid of others but of

⁸⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 143.

themselves. That's why he is afraid. ⁸⁷

The internalized habit of fear has made him accustomed to dying. Yet even in death, he dare not say a word of revolt:

直到死都不說一句反動話，這樣死才死得不冤枉！

(頁111)

He died without saying a counter-revolutionary word.

Only this kind of death is worthy. ⁸⁸

The voice of death from the state apparatus of the Communist Government is always there stopping Zhang Xianliang from moving upwards. There is no escape:

每次你都想向那渠坡上爬，而你耳邊每次都能聽見

「政府」厲聲地喊「站住」和「組織上」拉動槍栓
的聲音。(頁55)

Every time you wanted to climb up the sides of the ditch
in your ears you would hear the "Government" shouting
in a stern voice "Freeze" and the "Organization" pulling
back the rifle bolt. ⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 232.

⁸⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 111.

⁸⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 55.

Zhang's journey goes on but the shadow of the past is always there. It becomes a ventriloquist voice accompanying him for ever:

你別想改變你的命運！這個聲音伴隨了你的一生。

(頁51)

Don't ever think of changing your fate! This voice will accompany you all life. ⁹⁰

and everywhere:

每次出國旅行他都以為會將過去的陰影遠遠地丟在故土，然而所有往事仍舊像皮膚一樣附在他的身上和他同時騰空而起。(頁71)

Every time when leaving his country for a trip, he would think of leaving behind the shadows of the past far far away in his homeland. Yet all past events were still like the skin attached to his body and took off with him into the air. ⁹¹

In *Getting used to dying*, institutionalized practices have constituted the formation of the cultural self. Through material rituals, individuals are hailed and

⁹⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 51.

⁹¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 71.

interpellated as subjects. Every encounter with the state machinery structures one's personal identification:

他一面彎著腰履行各種手續一面驚詫國家機關的威力。機關的繁文縟節和對繁文縟節的尊重是在血液裏活動的遺傳病。中國人進了中國人自己的機關即刻會冷得發抖。那會客室裏擺設的假古董炫耀著中華文化，他戰慄地感到虛假比真實更持久、更偉大。（頁67）

He on the one hand bent his neck to carry out all the procedures, on the other was quite amazed at the power of state institutions. The bureaucratic redtape of the institution and the respect towards it are genetic diseases working in the blood. Chinese people entering the Chinese people's own institutions will immediately shiver with cold. The fake relics in the living room boast of Chinese culture. Shivering, he feels that fictitious things last longer and are greater than real ones.⁹²

The individual self has succumbed to the cultural imagination. However accidentally,

⁹² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 67.

once born as a Chinese on Chinese soil, an individual is forced to gain a collective identity. He can no longer escape being imprinted with the China experience,

他想起了自己呱呱落地之前的情景：天風橫吹，亂雲如箭，他偶然落在一片名叫中國的土地。對於遊魂來說只有天堂和地獄的區別如今卻有了國籍以及肉身帶來的種種煩擾。這種種困擾便構成了所謂的經歷。經歷會永遠地存在，哪怕肉身已焚為灰燼。
(頁71)

He remembered the scene of his birth: heavenly wind blowing across, confused clouds shot like arrows. He landed by chance on a piece of land called China. For the wandering spirit, there is only the distinction between heaven and hell but now also nationality and all the various vexations that accompany the physical body. These kinds of troubles become the so-called experience. Experience will exist for ever, even when the body is burnt to ashes.⁹³

and is condemned to bear all kinds of burdens of the race:

⁹³ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 71.

儘管你不過是一個天外的游魂只偶然墜落在一塊名叫中國的土地上，然而這個奇異的國度在你的肉身上蓋上了它黃色的印記以後，你便怎麼也刷剝不掉。在這個國度裏奇異的經歷不但使你遍體鱗傷，並且使你靈魂本身也裂開了一條條縫隙，待肉身焚為灰燼靈魂甚至將被微風吹成碎片。(頁73)

Even though you were merely an extra-terrestrial wandering spirit from Heaven falling onto Chinese soil by accident, once this country cast her yellow seal on your body, you could never brush it off. In this country, strange experiences not only fill your body with hurt, even the spirit itself will develop one crack after another, so that when the physical body burns into cinders even a gentle breeze can shatter the spirits in pieces.⁹⁴

There is no escape from the burdens and no cure for the hurts.

In the earlier short stories of reform like *Dragon seed* and of remembrance like *Descendants of the River*, with a more remote third person protagonist, Zhang could hide himself behind the mask of a persona and still boast of an easy identification between the ego ideal and his cultural self. At this end stage of the

⁹⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 73.

psychological journey, speaking in his own voice, Zhang Xianliang could no longer demonstrate the same pride and confidence. Now, Chinese culture is viewed as a source of repression:

那立在櫥櫃裏的唐三彩好像正要飛奔下來將他踏在腳下如同立在它旁邊的漢代「馬踏飛燕」。他惴惴地端詳著「馬踏飛燕」漸漸悟到了中國人自古以來就想把一切矯健飛騰之物壓在自己下面以證明自己偉大。(頁68)

That Tang tricolour pottery nearby inside the cupboard seems to fly downwards and tread him down under the feet like the Han "horse on the flying swallow" by its side. Cautiously examining the "horse on the flying swallow," he gradually understands how ever since ancient times Chinese people want to tread upon everything vigorous and transcendent under their feet to prove their own greatness.⁹⁵

The formation of the cultural self is part of an historical process. The cycle of personal life and death corresponds to the historical dialectics of rights and wrongs:

⁹⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 68

只要有政黨那個政黨便會犯錯誤，因為政黨實際上就是一伙人。偉大的政黨就是不斷犯偉大的錯誤能夠不斷偉大地改正的政黨。歷史在這種循環中前進；人在這種循環中誕生和死亡。（頁85）

Whenever there are political parties there are mistakes since a political party is in fact a band of people. A great political party is one which goes on making great mistakes and then making great rectifications. History makes progress in this kind of cycle and men are born and die in such a cycle.⁹⁶

Since the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957 and during the Cultural Revolution from 1965-75, intellectuals were ruthlessly suppressed by the Communist Party and began leading a life of the living dead:

知識分子要取得革命的諒解只有憑死亡來證明。
（頁110）

To be forgiven by the Revolution, intellectuals have to rely on death to prove themselves.⁹⁷

In this particular phase of history, intellectuals lost their self identity. The tortures in

⁹⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 85.

⁹⁷ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 110.

life imposed on them are more serious than the conflicts in thought inside their mind:

多少年以後我才知道是飢餓挽救了我，使我不致於陷入思考的痛苦。如果不是因為飢餓，復活了以後我就會想「我是誰？」想甚麼狗屁人生悲劇，我的肚子雖然空虛但早就灌滿了哲學家關於生與死的名字，那些狗屁肯定會折騰得我再次死去。（頁153）

After so many years I finally learnt that it was hunger that saves me, relieving me from the pain of thought. If not because of hunger, when I was brought back to life would think "Who am I?" Thinking of the shit human tragedy. Though my stomach is empty, it has long been full of philosophers' names for life or death. That shit would have been sure to torture me to death again.⁹⁸

In the tragedy of life, intellectuals are deprived of their freedom of choice:

哈姆雷特是甚麼鬼樣子我沒見過，即使我進過陰曹地府我也沒遇見過他。我只知道他唸叨著甚麼「死去還是活著，這可是個問題」對我來說根本不是問題。如果我每死一次都要唸叨唸叨就會把腦袋都想

⁹⁸ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 153.

炸，沒有把我槍斃我自己倒先死了，何況是死是活都不由我。（頁159）

I have never seen what the hell Hamlet looks like. Even when I went to hell, I still failed to meet him. I only know that what he muttered about "To be or not to be, that is the question" is not a question for me. If each time I died I had had to mutter, I would have exploded my own head. I was already dead before I could be shot, and anyhow being alive or dead was not under my determination.⁹⁹

They are either dead, or get used to dying:

我想我幾次將死未死大約就因為我是強盜的後代，這個國家有一段歷史是不能容納斯文的知識分子的。（頁82）

I thought that probably because I was nearly dead several times I was the descendant of robbers. This country had a phase of history which could not tolerate gentle intelligentsia.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 159.

¹⁰⁰ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 82.

Only those who have the strongest stamina can survive the purge.

Fictional fantasies offer to Zhang Xianliang a temporary release from the historical scars:

我只帶著歷史給我的傷痕你脫下歷史給你的偽裝，
讓我們都赤條條地漫步在白色的沙灘上。（頁156）

I only carry the scars from history and you strip off the
disguise given to you by history. Let us both be stark
naked and walk along the white sandy beach.¹⁰¹

Such a fantasy of love is a reaction against the trauma of history. From his own imaginative experience, Zhang finally reaches a new understanding of literature in relation to the real world:

所以，我現在明白了甚麼是文學。

文學，表現的是人類的幻想，而幻想就是對現實的
反抗！（頁99）

Therefore, now I understood what is literature.

Literature presents the fantasies of mankind, and

¹⁰¹ Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 156.

fantasies are a rebellion against reality! ¹⁰²

This new understanding of the role of literature may serve to summarize Zhang Xianliang's journey of feelings as a whole. Storytelling for Zhang is a psychological rebellion against the trauma of history and culture. Under the disguise of language, he has fantasized a fictional rebellion against a social and political reality he dare not resist in the real world. Psychologically living through the extremity of feelings from love, sex to death, a heightened sense of self consciousness is achieved. Now he is ready to enter a new stage of the journey: from the journey of feelings towards the journey of initiation.

¹⁰² Zhang Xianliang, *Getting used to dying* 99.

Conclusion:

Section A. From feelings to initiation

In the 1990s, Zhang Xianliang published two more fictional works: the novella *My bodhi tree* (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》) and the short story "Puberty" ("Qingchun qi" <青春>). In terms of the narrative reference, the two works are no longer stories told from the viewpoint of fictionalized or semi-autobiographical characters. *My bodhi tree* is a diary spoken in the voice of Zhang Xianliang himself narrating his own experience during the three years of "natural" famine from 1960-62 in mainland China. "Puberty" is a reflection of Zhang's personal experiences of sexual awakenings from the early years and sexual repressions in his mature years. Both fictional works are claimed by Zhang Xianliang to be historical documents. The narrator/ protagonist "I" is the writer himself speaking and acting.

My bodhi tree (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》) was first published by The Writers' Publishing co. (Zuojia chubanshe 作家出版社) in June 1994. The first half of the novel was published in the May issue of *The World of Fiction* (*Xiaoshuo jie* 《小說界》) and *Selected Novella* (*Zhongpian xiaoshuo xuankan* 《中篇小說選刊》) in 1992 ¹ and the second half in the February issue of *The World of Fiction* in 1994 under the title *Worries are wisdom* (*Fannao jiushi zhihui* 《煩惱就是智慧》).

¹ The first half of the novel is translated in English by Martha Avery under the title *Grass Soup* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1994) .

² The full volumn was later retitled *My bodhi tree*. *My bodhi tree* is a diary record of Zhang Xianliang's past experience in the labour reform camps in which he recorded his life during the three years of famine from 1960-62 after Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward of 1958.

The diarist in the novella claims that for fear of inspection by Party supervisors, the diary first appeared in the form of a chronological record of factual details. It then became a novel by the additional annotations later superimposed upon the text. Therefore the diary is both a factual document and a novel of fragmentary reflections. The story begins with July 11, 1960, 700 days after the diarist was sent to the farm and ended in Spring 1961 when he dies. The daily life of the labour reform camps was explained in detail. The convicts had to build adobe houses, remove weeds, plant paddy rice, radish, cabbage, sweet potato and pick vegetables.

During the famine, they had to observe "low basic standard rations, with gourds and vegetables as substitutes" (*dibiaozhun guacai dai* 低標準, 瓜菜代). The most important period of the day was mealtimes. Due to insufficient food, people devoured whatever was left. Still they died one after another. The diary also recorded different friends the diarist made and their past histories. In holidays, reform labourers had to attend re-education meetings to deliver ideological reports and make mutual

² Refer to Gao Song 高嵩, "Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's publications" <張賢亮著作系年>, in Gao Song, ed., *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's fiction* (Xi'an: Taibai wenyi, 1995), 424-433.

accusations and self-confessions. Disobedient convicts would be punished by public exhibitions and physical penalties known as "photo-taking" (*zhaoxiang* 照相). The diarist talked about his so-called romance with a nameless female prisoner, his chase for the milk cow whose breasts reminded him of food rather than sex, and his comrades' interest in the secret parts of female corpses. Sometimes there were visitors to the farm. Generally speaking, the diarist ate and worked day and night, aiming only for the satisfaction of physical needs. Besides survival, all higher functions of humanity were lost.

"Puberty" ("Qingchun qi" <青春>) is a short story published together with a collection of 10 earlier essays of Zhang Xianliang's under the book title *Puberty* (*Qingchun qi* 《青春》) by Economic Daily (*Jingji ribao* 經濟日報) and Shaanxi Travels (*shaanxi lüyou* 陝西旅遊) Publishing Co. in December 1999. It is an autobiography of Zhang reviewing his physical and mental maturation in retrospect. In the story, Zhang recalls his childhood experience of sexual awakening. The speaker claims that not until the 1980s in his 50 odd years was he aware of "puberty" (*qingchun qi* 青春). At the age of six, he saw for the first time a near equivalent word "youthfulness" (*qingchun* 青春) in a poem of Du Fu's taught by a private tutor. In junior middle school, the term appeared in textbooks quite often but no teachers explained it to him, as if it were the same as "eating" (*chi* 吃), something that nobody explained but everybody understood. At the time, they were usually taught to dedicate their "youthful years" to the country. In the 1980s, Chinese people began to discover the

"self" (*ziwo* 自我) and the sexual connotation of the term was then fully realized.

Looking back, the speaker recalled an event (*shijian* 事件) when he was 5 or 6 years old. In a cat and mouse game, he was hidden inside a cupboard with an older girl neighbour. Sending him a warm current of air from her mouth, she embraced him tightly and touched him all over with her hands. The speaker regarded this as a ritual (*yishi* 儀式) of first encounter with the other sex. Seven years later when he turned 13 years old, the speaker was captivated by the white triangular area of skin exposed at the neck of a female classmate dressed in black clothes. He then passed through the "heat period" (*fa qing* 發情) to the "adoration period" (*ai mu* 愛慕).

Afterwards, the speaker could only read about love and women from fiction and drama. In the real world comradeship and class distinction outweighed gender relationship. In his adolescence, the speaker had been deprived of any normal interaction with girls. Unreleased sexual energy was diverted towards fits of socialist outpourings. Youngsters were taught to give their heart to the Party (*jiaoxin* 交心) rather than to their lovers. On one occasion in high school the speaker was asked to report to his form master things he was alleged to have stolen. Due to his capitalist family background, he was advised and persuaded to admit the misdemeanor. The theft was then announced in public in front of the speaker's mother resulting in his expulsion from school.

In the latter half of the speaker's youthful years, the agitations of "puberty" surface in the form of physical violence. At the age of 33, the speaker in the labour

reform brigade was asked to guard the water gate. During the harvest period, water was essential for the irrigation of crops. Farmers of the revolutionary team came to seize the water. In one conflict, the speaker cut off the finger of one young farmer with his iron spade. He felt the pleasure in the release of blood and energy resembling love-making with women.

In the surveillance labour reform by the revolutionary people's administration, the speaker saw his teammate making love with his wife. Since the time for family visits was brief and outside it was raining heavily, the couple had no other time or place for love making. The speaker had to turn away his eyes but he still heard the moans and groans ending in the joyful exclamation of "the end" (wanle 完了). He discovered that love making between husband and wife had no difference from the mating of animals. At the age of 39, the speaker himself finally had an opportunity for sex with the wife of another teammate of his in the labour reform team. But he failed in the sexual experience. Looking back in retrospect, "puberty" for the speaker means the youthful strength of fearlessness in face of the unforeseeable future.

"Puberty" is in fact a re-statement of Zhang's journey of feelings, now in direct autobiographical voice rather than through semi-autobiographical fictional characters. On the other hand, *My bodhi tree* marks the beginning of a new journey of initiation. In this crucial transition, Zhang Xianliang has progressed from the expiation of feelings in his heart towards self-awakening in his mind. Storytelling has prepared the writer psychologically for an entry into the new world, or at least a new understanding of the old world. As in the epigram of *My bodhi tree*:

眾生以菩提爲煩惱

佛陀以煩惱爲菩提

People read the bodhi as bother

Buddha reads the bother as bodhi ³

Physical sufferings and traumatic experiences in life finally become the source of wisdom for the next journey to begin. The future has to learn from the past. In *My bodhi tree*, Zhang Xianliang says:

如果不是爲了未來我便不會受這番折磨。我覺得我有責任要把一個漫長的時間裏的空間重新拼湊起來，恢復它的整體圖形。是誰讓我活了下來，並賦與我記憶和記錄的能力，我便要爲她負責。她決不是無緣無故地在千百萬亡靈中選中了我，讓我有如此的僥倖，行、住、坐、臥在這片黃土地之上而不是深埋在黃土地下面。（頁146）⁴

Were it not for the future I would not put myself through this again. But I feel a responsibility to piece together the

³ Zhang Xianliang, *My bodhi tree* (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1994).

⁴ Zhang Xianliang, *My bodhi tree* (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》) (Beijing: Zuoja, 1994) ,

disjointed events of that period, to restore the complete picture. I owe this to the being that both allowed me to survive and endowed me with the capacity to remember and record. There must be a reason for my being selected from among the tens of millions who died -- so that I am now fortunately walking, sitting, living, sleeping on this Earth rather than buried beneath it.⁵

Zhang Xianliang feels the necessity to reorganize the fragmentary past and give it meaning. The purpose of clarifying the past is to prevent it from happening again.

因為凡是人們不清楚的事件都會重演一遍，這就是歷史（頁147）

. . . for every event that is unclear to mankind will be played out again. That is "history". . .⁶

Section B. End of the Journey

This dissertation reads Zhang Xianliang's fictional corpus in terms of an

⁵ Zhang Xianliang, *My Bodhi Tree*, Martha Avery, trans., (London: Secker and Warburg, 1996),

⁶ Zhang Xianliang, *My bodhi tree*, 147.

ongoing journey towards self-awakening and self-initiation. Zhang Xianliang has been under different kinds of labour reform and thought rectification for twenty-two years in mainland China. The traumatic experience haunts his consciousness and forces him to seek for release by telling stories about himself in disguise. Zhang begins his psychological journey with fictionalized representations of others towards a truthful record of his autobiographical self. During the journey, the narrative viewpoint changes from that of a sympathetic observer of historical events to a passionate confessor of guilt and shame, then back to a detached observer of one's own past in retrospection.

Storytelling has revealed the hidden past to the world of language through substitutions and displacements. Zhang Xianliang's journey of the self has five stages enacted in the language of reform as in *Dragon seed* and *Style of man*; in the language of remembrance as in "Four letters," "Express No. 43," "The Heavier the frost, The Deeper the colour," "In such a spring," "Story of old man Xing and his dog," and *Descendants of the River*; in the language of love as in "First kiss," "Sunset," "Gypsy," "Bitter springs," "Soul and body," *Love in a dungeon*, *Mimosa*, in the language of sex as in *Good morning! Friends*, *Half of Man is Woman*, and in the language of death as in *Getting used to dying*.

In the journey of the self, each language fulfils part of his wishes while repressing the others. Whenever the conscious subject finds a false sense of satisfaction from the ideological mirror of language, the residues of dissatisfaction simply come back and haunt his imagination, triggering off a continuous chain of further substitutions and displacements in other forms of language. The chain of signifiers progresses from the language of reform to the language of remembrance, at first intended to look forward,

finally forced to look backward. The languages of reform and remembrance interpellate the writer as a materialist. Then the journey gathers its own momentum travelling towards more elemental forms of love, sex to death. They are the languages repressed by the grand narrative of history and culture. Conscious formulations of the writer have to give way to the free play of signifiers in the desiring chain.

At different stages of his journey, Zhang reaches different understandings. By re-examining his own past and the recent history of his nation, Zhang Xianliang tries to meditate upon ways for the rejuvenation of the withered spirit of the Chinese after the destructive years of various political movements under Communist rule. The Revolutionary ideology of the ultra-left fanatics brought vast destruction to the culture and the nation through its distorted understanding of human nature. Rectification therefore rest in the redemption of man through a renewed understanding of humanity.

Fictional works of reflection and remembrance are wish fulfillments of Zhang Xianliang to give meaning to his 22 years of suffering. The account aims to locate his personal life in the course of history. He wishes to be the spokesperson for those who died under the tortures of various political movements and those who suffered in the labour reform camps. In the language of memoir, Zhang Xianliang revisits the trauma of individuals after the Anti-Rightist Movement and the Cultural Revolution. Traumatic symptoms of the past leave traces of painful memories in his consciousness. Through the mouths of fictional characters, he reflects upon the sufferings of individuals and pledges their allegiance to the Party. The source of evil was attributed to the opportunists and the ultra-Leftists led by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. In his conscious formulation, the purpose of history writing is to avoid its repetition. Yet

under the grand narrative of history and culture, it has repressed a hidden narrative of love. It is this repressed story of love which keeps on repeating itself in the rest of the fictional journey of Zhang.

Inspired by the Yellow River, at once nature and culture, he comes to the materialist realization that history has its own course despite human intentions and interruptions. The River purifies itself in time. Human beings purify themselves in history. The future of China is in the hands of those who come through the ordeal of life. Self-preservation precedes national preservation. Self-understanding is also the first criterion before national redemption can be possible. The Revolutionary ideology of the ultra-left fanatics brought vast destructions to the culture and the nation for its distorted understanding of human nature. Rectifications therefore rest in the redemption of man through a renewed understanding of humanity. That explains why Zhang turns inwards towards himself.

In his later works, Zhang Xianliang turns inward for the source of Chinese problems towards the primitive and physical instincts inside himself like the need for food, the desire for woman and the wish to die. In this later stage of his fictional journey, we witness the formation of self through the disguised languages of love and sex. It records the mental process of self-illumination through the symbolic expiation of intense feelings. Through the mouths of the semi-autobiographical protagonists, Zhang re-tells the most painful experience of himself in the labour reform camps. In more extreme psychological moments, sex and death in fact intertwine with each other in the cauldron of the unconscious. From the journey of love and sex ending in the climax of death, Zhang Xianliang is initiated into a new world, or at least a new understanding of

the old world. The psychological experience finally becomes the source of wisdom for a new journey of the mind.

Appendix I: Published Works of Zhang Xianliang and Other Related Texts

(A) Anthologies

Anthology of Zhang Xianliang (*Zhang Xianliang ji* 《張賢亮集》). Fuzhou: Haixia wenyi 海峽文藝, 1986.

Behind the tree is the sun. (*Shu houmian shi taiyang* 《樹後面是太陽》). Zhang Xianliang, ed. Taipei: Yuanshen, 1989.

Bitter springs (*Xiaoer bulake* 《肖爾布拉克》). Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi 上海文藝, 1984.

The Black cannon romance (*Langman de heipao* 《浪漫的黑炮》). Taipei: Yuanshen 圓神, 1990.

Dialectics of fiction writing (*Xie xiaoshuo de bianzhengfa* 《寫小說的辯証法》). Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi, 1987.

An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's fiction (*Zhang Xianliang xiaoshuo jingxuan* 《張賢亮小說精選》). Ed. Gao, Song 高嵩. Xi'an 西安: Taibai wenyi 太白文藝, 1995.

An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories (Zhang Xianliang zhongduanpian jingxuan 《張賢亮中短篇精選》). Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1994.

Fictional China (Xiaoshuo Zhongguo 《小說中國》). Beijing: Jingji ribao 經濟日報 and Shaanxi lüyou 陝西旅游, 1997.

Fictional China and Others (Xiaoshuo Zhongguo yu qita 《小說中國與其他》). Wuhan: Changjiang wenyi, 1999.

Good morning! Friends 《早安! 朋友》. Beijing: Zuojia 作家, 1994.

Journey of feelings — The Revelation of a materialist (Ganqing de licheng — Weiwulunzhe de qishilu 《感情的歷程 — 唯物論者的啓示錄》). Beijing: Zuojia, 1985.

Literary selections of Zhang Xianliang (Zhang Xianliang wenji 《張賢亮文集》). Gansu 甘肅: Gensu renmin, 1998.

Mimosa and Other Stories. Beijing: Panda Books, 1985.

Puberty (Qingchun qi 《青春期》). Beijing: Jingji ribao and Shaanxi lüyou, 1999.

The Representative works of Zhang Xianliang (Zhang Xianliang daibiaozuo 《張賢亮代表作》). Chengzhou: Huanghe wenyi 黃河文藝, 1989.

Selected works of Zhang Xianliang 《張賢亮選集》. 4 Vols. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985.

Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang (Zhang Xianliang zixuanji 《張賢亮自選集》). Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1986.

Short pieces from the edge (Bianyuan xiaopin 《邊緣小品》). Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin, 1995.

The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West (Hehuan: Zhang Xianliang xibu xiaoshuoxuan 《合歡：張賢亮西部小說選》). Xining: Qinghai renmin 青海人民, 1992.

Soul and body (Ling yu rou 《靈與肉》). Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1981.

Zhang Xianliang's trilogy of love (Zhang Xianliang aiqing sanbuqu 《張賢亮愛情三部曲》). Beijing: Huayi 華藝, 1992.

(B) Fictional Works

"Autumn scenery on the ridge" ("Long shang qiuse" <壟上秋色>).

---. In *Bitter springs*. 387-401.

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 166-181.

"Bitter springs" ("Xiaoer bulake" <肖爾布拉克>).

---. Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi 上海文藝, 1984.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 34-60.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*.

Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1994. 64-110.

---. In Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 105-147.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 64-110.

--- (Bitter springs). In *Mimosa and Other Stories*. Trans. Rui An. 182-233.

"The Black cannon romance" ("Langman de heipao" <浪漫的黑炮>).

---. In *Good morning! Friends*. 158-216.

---. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 339-398.

Descendants of the River (He de zisun 《河的子孫》).

---. Hongkong: Gengyun 耕耘, 1990.

---. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1983.

---. In *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang*. 76-215.

---. In *Bitter springs*. 184-330.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 198-359.

---. In *Good morning! Friends* (Zao'an pengyou). Beijing: Zuoja, 1994. 217-363.

---. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 3-159.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 198-359.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 112-204.

Dragon seed (Long Zhong 《龍種》).

---. In *Bitter springs*. 79-183.

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 207-318.

"Express no. 43" ("Sishisan ci kuaiche" <四十三次快車>).

---. In *Soul and body*. 84-105.

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 24-43.

"On father and son" (Fuzipian 《父子篇》). In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 554-578.

"First kiss" ("Chuwen" <初吻>).

---. In *Journey of feelings*. 1-23.

---. In *First kiss*. Beijing: Shaanxi lüyou, 2000.

Flying over Europa (Feiyue ouluoba 《飛越歐羅巴》). Tianjin: Baihua wenyi 百花文藝, 1986.

"Four letters" ("Si feng xin" <四封信>).

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 17-23.

Getting used to dying (Xiguan siwang 《習慣死亡》).

---. Hongkong: Mingbao, 1989.

---. Beijing: Zuojia, 1994.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's fiction*. 179-424.

---. In *Literary selections of Zhang Xianliang*. 219-446.

---. In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 283-523.

---. Trans. and ed. Martha Avery. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. *Good morning!*

Friends (Zaoan pengyou 《早安! 朋友》).

---. Beijing: Zuojia, 1994.

---. Hongkong: Mingchuang, 1988.

---. Taipei: Yuanjing, 1987.

---. In *Good morning! Friends*. 1-157.

---. In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 131-282.

"Gypsy" ("Jipusai ren" <吉普賽人>).

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* 74-99.

---. In *Soul and body*. 56-83.

Half of Man is Woman (*Nanren de yiban shi nüren* 《男人的一半是女人》).

---. Beijing: Chinese Literary Union (*Zhongguo wenlun* 中國文聯), 1985.

---. Chengdu 成都: Sichuan wenyi 四川文藝, 1986.

---. 9 th ed. Hong Kong: Mingchuang 明窗, 1990.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 321-465.

---. In *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang*. 385-592.

---. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 399-618.

---. In *Literary selections of Zhang Xianliang*. 1-217.

---. Trans. Martha Avery. London: Penguin, 1988.

"The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuang zhong se yu nong" 霜重色愈濃).

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 44-73.

---. In *Soul and body*. 106-137.

Love in a dungeon (*Tulao qinghua* 《土牢情話》).

---. Hongkong: Gengyun, 1990.

---. In *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang*. 1-75.

---. In *Bitter springs*. 1-78.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 111-197.

---. In Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985. 3-89.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 111-197.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 61-111.

---. In *Soul and body*. 138-222.

Mimosa (Lühuashu 《綠化樹》).

---. Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi 北京十月文藝, 1984.

---. Hongkong: Gengyun 耕耘, 1990.

---. In *Anthology of Zhang Xianliang*. 216-384.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's fiction*. 1-178.

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*.
Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1994. 360-553.

---. In *Mimosa and other stories*. Trans. Gladys Yang. Beijing: Panda Books, 1985.
13-181.

---. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 161-338.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 360-553.

My bodhi tree (*Wo de putishu* 《我的菩提樹》).

---. Beijing: Zuojia, 1994.

--- (*Grass Soup*). Trans. Martha Avery. London: Secker and Warburg, 1994.

--- (*Grass Soup*). Trans. Martha Avery. London: Minerva, 1994.

---. Trans. Martha Avery. London: Secker and Warburg, 1996.

"Puberty" ("Qingchun qi" <青春>).

---. In *Puberty*. Beijing: Jingji ribao and shaanxi lüyou, 1999. 1-117.

The Silk tree (*Hehuan* 《合歡》).

---. In *Literary selections of Zhang Xianliang*. 447-607.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 205-320.

"Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>).

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 33-63.

--- (A Herdsman's story). In *Mimosa and Other Stories*. Trans. Hu Zhihui and Wang Mingjie. 234-270.

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 138-165.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 33-63.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 16-33.

---. In *Soul and body*. 1-30.

"Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing Laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>).

---. In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 7-32.

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 115-137.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 7-32.

---. In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 1-15.

---. In *Soul and body*. 31-55.

Style of man (*Nanren de fengge* 《男人的風格》).

---. Taipei: Yuanjing 遠景, 1987.

---. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1983.

---. In Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 149-523.

"In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>).

---. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 100-114.

"Sunset" ("Xiyang" <夕陽>).

---. In *Bitter springs*. 373-386.

---. In Vol. 2 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 90-104.

Worries are wisdom (*Fannaο jiu shi zhihui* 《煩惱就是智慧》).

---. Hongkong: Mingchuang 明窗, 1992.

(C) Essays and Poems

"About *Mimosa*" ("Guanyu Lühuashu" <關於《綠化樹》>). In *Selected Novels* (*Xiaoshuo xuankan* 《小說選刊》). 7 (1984). Selectively reprinted in Wang Rui and Luo Qianyi, eds. *Selected materials of the short stories and novellas of the New Period*. Changchun: Jilin jiaoyu, 1988. 295, 296.

"An Amazingly big accumulation of commercial products" ("Yige jingren pangda de shangpin duiji" <一個驚人龐大的商品堆積>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 1-12.

"The Art of thinking and life presentation" ("Sisuo he biao xian rensheng de yishu" <思索和表現人生的藝術>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 41-50.

"Author's Preface to 'Style of man'" ("Nanren de fengge" zixu" <「男人的風格」自序>). In *Style of man*. Taipei: Yuanjing 遠景, 1987. 1-4.

"Author's Note" ("Zuozhe tizhi" <作者題識>). In *Journey of feelings — The Revelation of a materialist*.

"Beautiful eyes" ("Meili de yanjing" <美麗的眼睛>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 196-198.

"Contemporary Chinese writers should first be socialist reformers" ("Dangdai zhongguo zuojia shouxian yinggai shi shehui zhuyi gaigezhe" <當代中國作家首先應該是社會主義改革者>). 1984. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 648-657.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 569-579.

---. In *Short pieces from the edge*. 98-107.

"Cultural Revolution and North Europe" ("Wenhua dageming yu beiao" <文化大革命與北歐>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1995. 81-87.

"Descendants of the 'Vikings'" ('Weijing' de houdai" <「維京」的後代>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1995. 13-27.

"Dialectics of fiction writing" ("Xiexiaoshuo de bianzhengfa" <寫小說的辯証法>). 1983. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 658-671.

"A Different kind of feelings in the heart" ("Bieyou yifan jiwei zai xintou" <別有一番滋味在心頭>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 62-64.

"Disorganized feelings" ("Yougen wuxu" <有感無序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 19-21.

"Dong Zhongshu with blond hair and green eyes -- Sinologist in North Europe" ("Jinfa biyan de Dong Zhongshu -- Beiyou de hanxue jia" <金髮碧眼的董仲舒 -- 北歐的漢學家>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 28-40.

"East, West" ("Dongfang, xifang" <東方、西方>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 122-130.

"Epilogue" ("Houji" <後記>). In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1994. 579-580.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 588-589.

"Essays on father and son" ("Fuzi pian" <父子篇>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 169-192.

"Exploring time and space occupied by life" ("Tuo zhan shengming zhanling de shikong" <拓展生命占領的時空>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 134-138.

"Foreword" ("Qianyan" <前言>). In *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novellas and short stories*. 1-3.

"Foreword to *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*" ("Zhang Xianliang xiaoshuo zisunji qianyan" <《張賢亮小說自選集》前言>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 72-76.

"General preface to Mount Helan literary series" ("Helanshan wenxue congshu zongxu" <賀蘭山文學叢書總序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 54-56.

"Good! Preface to borderland: graceful bearing of taxation" ("Hao! Xu Saishang: shuiwu de fengcai" <好！一序《塞上：稅務的風采》>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 65-69.

"He grew on the poor soil -- Preface to *The Sons and Daughters of Muslims*" ("Ta zai jitu zhong shengzhang -- Musilin de ernümeng xu" <他在瘠土中生長——《穆斯林的兒女們序》>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 34-38.

"Herdsman's soul and body" ("Mumaren de ling yu rou" <牧馬人的靈與肉>). 1982. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 202-205.

"Hitting water in mid-stream" ("Dao zhongliu jishui" <到中流擊水>). In *Short pieces from the edge*.

"Honest person's honest literature -- Preface to Nantai's *Women and small town*" ("Laoshi ren de laoshi wenxue: Nantai's Nüren he xiaozhen xu" <老實人

的老實文學—南台《女人和小鎮》序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 46-48.

"An Invitation letter to Wang Meng" ("Zhi Wang Meng de yaoqing han" <致王蒙的邀請函>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 128-133.

"The Land yearned for life and wisdom" ("Tudi hewang shengming he zhihui" <土地渴望生命和智慧>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 22-30.

"A Letter to Hairong -- Preface to *Selected fictional works of Hairong*" ("Gei hairong de yifeng xin -- *Hairong xiaoshuo ji daixu*" <給海容的一封信—《海容小說集》代序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 49-51.

"A Letter to Li Guowen" ("Zhi Li Guowen xin" <致李國文信>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 154-157.

"Mad piano" ("Fafeng de gangqin" <發瘋的鋼琴>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 70-71.

"Manifesto of the literary mode of merchant" ("Wenhuaxing shuangren sunyan" <文化型商人宣言>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 116-119.

"Means of entertainment" ("Xiaoqian de fangshi" <消遣的方式>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 1-3.

"Men more charming than the green mountain" ("Ren bi qingshan geng wumei" <人比青山更嫵媚>). In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 632-640.

"Men rely on their heads, that is, their thoughts to stand" ("Ren shi kao tounao, ye jiushi kao sixiang zhanzhu de. . . ." <人是靠頭腦，也就是靠思想站著的. . . >). 1982. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 641-647.

"Mixed mutton entrails" ("Yang zasui" <羊雜碎>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 199-202.

"Motorcyclers, hippies, free city" ("Tie qishi, pangke, ziyoucheng" <「鐵騎士」、
「滂克」、
「自由城」>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 88-100.

"Mourning for the grandfather" ("Du Waigong" <悼外公>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 193-195.

"Mutations of body and soul" ("Xinling he routi de bianhua" <心靈和肉體的變化>). 1981. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 195-201.

"The Necessity to enter a state of freedom -- written in the 3rd year of professional writing" ("Bixu jinru ziyou zhuangtai -- Xie zai zhuan ye chuangzuo de di san nian." <必須進入自由狀態 — 寫在專業創作的第三年>). 1984. In Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 672-684.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1986.
554-568.

---. In *Short pieces from the edge*. 85-97.

"Neighbors in the remotest corner of the world -- Colleagues in North Europe"
("Tianya yue bilun" <天涯若比鄰 — 北歐的同行>). In Vol. 4 of
Selected works of Zhang Xianliang. 68-80.

"About Newsletter of *Thus I heard*" ("Guanyu Rushi wo wen de tongxin" <關於《如是我聞》的通信>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 158-168.

"Night" ("Ye" <夜>). In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 3-5.

"Ode to the confucian generals" ("Rujiang song" <儒將頌>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 60-61.

"A Paper full of nonsense" ("Man zhi huangtang yan" <滿紙荒唐言>). 1981. In
Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1985.
187-194.

"Participation, avoidance and transcendence" ("Canyu, taobi he chaoyue" <參與、逃避和超越>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 144-148.

"Past and present, East and West" ("Gujin zhongwai" <古今中外>). In Vol. 3 of
Selected works of Zhang Xianliang. 619-626.

"Perspective on uncorrupted politics by a Chinese native" ("Zhongguo tuzhu de lian Zheng guan" <中國土著的廉政觀>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 7-10.

"The Philosophy of women's underpants" ("Nüren neiku de zhéxué" <女人內褲的哲學>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 4-6.

"Preface to *The Bath of fire*" ("Fóyú xù" <《火浴》序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 39-42.

"Preface to Hu Zhengwei's painting" ("Hu Zhengwei huàcè xù" <《胡正偉畫冊》序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 52-53.

"Preface to the inaugural exhibition of Chinese woodblocks" ("Zhongguo shǒu jiē bānhuà jīngpīn zhǎn' qiányán" <「中國首屆版畫精品展」前言>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 31.

"Preface to *Night talks in phoenix city*" ("Fēngshēn yèhuà xù" <《鳳城夜話》序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 57-59.

"Preface: In pursuit of wisdom" ("Xù: zhuīqiú zhìhuì" <序：追求智慧>). In *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West*. 1-4.

"Preface to the Japanese edition of *Love in a dungeon*" ("Tulāo qīnghuà rìwénbān xù" <《土牢情話》日文版序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 83-84.

"Preface to Zhou Kaicheng's anthology of calligraphy works" ("Zhou Kaicheng shufa zuopinji xu" <《周開成書法作品集》序>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 32-33.

"In pursuit of wisdom" ("Juqiu zhihui" <追求智慧>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 149-153.

"Screen, screen, stage" ("Pingmu, yinmu, wutai" <屏幕、銀幕、舞台>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 115-121.

"Selling out wilderness" ("Chumai huangliang" <出賣荒涼>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 139-143.

"Serenade" ("Yege" <夜歌>). In *Short pieces from the edge*. 203-207.

"Song of the strong wind" ("Dafeng ge" <大風歌>). In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 11-16.

---. In *Self-selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 1-6.

"A Song sung at dusk" ("Zai bangwan chang de ge" <在傍晚唱的歌>). In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 6-10.

"Speaking from caretaking of the handicapped" ("Cong jiaogu canfeiren shuokai qu" <從照顧殘廢人說開去>). In Vol. 4 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 60-67.

"Speaking from the single eye of Kutuzov and the single arm of Nelson" ("Cong Kutuzuofu de duyan he Naerxun de duanbi tanqi" <從庫圖佐夫的獨眼和納爾遜的斷臂談起>). 1981. In Vol. 1 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang*. 182-186.

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Appendix II: Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's Major Publications ¹

1957

"Night" ("Ye" <夜>). In *Yan River of Literature and Arts* (*Yanhe wenyi* 《延河文藝》). (Jan 1957).

"Songs sung after work" ("Zai shougong hou chang de ge" <在收工後唱的歌>). In *Yan River of Literature and Arts*. (Feb 1957).

"Songs sung at dusk" ("Zai bangwan chang de ge" <在傍晚唱的歌>). In *Yan River of Literature and Arts*. (March 1957).

"Song of the strong wind" ("Dafeng ge" <大風歌>). In *Yan River of Literature and Arts*. (July 1957).

1979

"Four letters" ("Sifeng xin" <四封信>). In *Literary Arts of Ningxia* (*Ningxia wenyi* 《寧夏文藝》). 1 (1979).

¹ Refer to Gao Song 高嵩, "Chronology, *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* Vols. 1-3" <《張賢亮選集》一二三卷作品年表>, in Vol. 3 of *Selected works of Zhang Xianliang* (Tianjin: Baihua wenyi, 1995), 696-698; "Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's publications" <張賢亮著作系年>, in Gao Song 高嵩, ed., *An Essential selection of Zhang Xianliang's novels* (Xi'an: Taibai wenyi, 1995), 424-433; Wei Yiling, Zhang Jingsheng and Yuren 魏宜玲、張京生、愚人, comp., "Chronology of Zhang Xianliang's publications" <張賢亮著作系年>, in *The Silk tree: Selected works of Zhang Xianliang's novels of the West* (Xining: Qinghai renmin, 1992), 466-473; and Beijing renmin chubanshe, comp., "Index to major works" <主要作品目錄>, in *Zhang Xianliang* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1994).

"Express no. 43" ("Sishisanci kuaiche" <四十三次快車>). In *Literary Arts of Ningxia*. 2 (1979).

"The Heavier the frost, the Deeper the colour" ("Shuangzhong se yu nong" <霜重色愈濃>). In *Literary Arts of Ningxia*. 3 (1979).

"Gypsy" ("Jibusai ren" <吉卜賽人>). In *Literary Arts of Ningxia*. 5 (1979).

1980

"In such a spring" ("Zai zheyang de chuntian li" <在這樣的春天裏>). In *Shuofang* 《朔方》. (Jan 1980).

"Story of old man Xing and his dog" ("Xing laohan he gou de gushi" <邢老漢和狗的故事>). In *Shuofang* 《朔方》. (Feb 1980).

"Soul and body" ("Ling yu rou" <靈與肉>). In *Shuofang* 《朔方》. (Sept 1980).

1981

Love in a dungeon (*Tulao qinghua* 《土牢情話》). In *October* (*Shiyue* 《十月》). 1 (1981).

"Talking from the single eye of Kutuzov and the single arm of Nelson" ("Cong kutuzuofu de duyuan he Naerxun de duanbi tanqi" <從庫圖佐夫的獨眼和納爾遜的斷臂談起>). In *Journal of Selected Fiction* (*Xiaoshuo xuankan* 《小說選刊》). (Jan 1981).

"A Paper full of nonsense" ("Manzhi huangtangyan" <滿紙荒唐言>). In *Flying Sky* (*Feitian* 《飛天》). (March 1981).

"Changes in body and soul" ("Xinling he routi de bianhua" <心靈和肉體的變化>). In *River Yalu* (*Yalujiang* 《鴨綠江》). (April 1981).

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1983

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1984

"Men more charming than green mountains" ("Ren bi qingshan geng wumei" <人比青山更嫵媚>). In *Shuofang* (Jan 1984).

Mimosa (*Lühuashu* 《綠化樹》). *October* (*Shiyue* 《十月》). 2 (1984).

"Contemporary Chinese writers should first be socialist reformers" ("Dangdai Zhongguo zuojia shouxian yinggai shi shehui zhuyi gaigezhe" <當代中國作家首先應該是社會主義改革者>). In *Hundered Flowers Delta* (*Baihuazhou* 《百花洲》). 2 (1984).

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"On father and son" ("Fuzi pian" <父子篇>). In *Literature of the Yellow River* (*Huanghe wenxue* 《黃河文學》). 1 (1992).

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1993

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